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SEE NO

EVIL

How American businesses
collaborate with China's
repressive government

G. PASCAL ZACHARY REPORTS



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“If there’s a nuclear terrorist attack or a major pandemic ... you’re going to see a level of government incompetence that’ll take you back to the Declaration of Independence.”

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON,
EX-AIDE TO COLIN POWELL, ON OCTOBER 19



Editorial

Lies Judith Miller Told Us By Joel Bleifuss

In the last few months all manner of gas has been expended on the Valerie Plame case. Did Karl Rove and Scooter Libby out Plame as a

CIA officer to punish her husband Joseph Wilson IV? Who else in the White House knew of or condoned this crime? And is there some kind of medal we can bestow on Judith Miller, who suffered prison to protect her First Amendment rights?

Yes it makes for good drama, but in a perverse way the Plame case obscures the larger story. The media understandably finds it more interesting to ferret out the specific crimes of a Karl Rove than to reflect on the larger, more profound crime: how we were misled into invading Iraq. First, the Bush administration created a catalogue of lies and misinformation in order to justify invasion. Second, some prominent members of the national media parroted those lies.

And no one squawked louder than the *New York Times'* Miller. As a former CIA analyst told *Salon's* James C. Moore: "The White House had a perfect deal with Miller. [U.S.-funded Iraqi dissident Ahmed] Chalabi is providing the Bush people with the information they need to support their political objectives with Iraq, and he is supplying the same material to Judy Miller. Chalabi tips her on something and then she goes to the White House, which has already heard the same thing

from Chalabi, and she gets it corroborated by some insider she always describes as a 'senior administration official.'"

For example, on September 8, 2002, Miller reported on the front page of the *Times* that intercepted aluminum tubes indicated that Saddam was developing a nuclear bomb. That day, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice and Dick Cheney all appeared on Sunday morning talk shows, citing Miller's sensational exposé, which was debunked, with much less fanfare, five days later.

On May 26, 2004, *Times* Executive Editor Bill Keller explained that an internal audit "found a number of instances of coverage that was not as rigorous as it should have been." He cited six faulty stories about the threat posed by Iraq, all but one of which was written or co-written by Miller, who was not mentioned by name.

Miller has not been hesitant to voice her belief that Saddam posed a threat. She told Moore, "I understood that these people ... who hated us so much ... that if they ever got their hands on WMD, they would use them. Do I have a belief that the WMD exist, and a fear? Yeah, I have a real fear for my country."

Salon's Juan Cole, however, cautions

against viewing Miller as a puppet of the neocons. He writes, "In the end, it seems that Miller will go down in history not so much as a true believer as a useful idiot."

Over the course of her legal travails, the *Times* published 15 editorials defending Miller's right to protect her sources. In October, the Society of Professional Journalists bestowed Miller with its "First Amendment Award." The decision was not without controversy.

The Northern California Chapter tried to introduce a resolution that defended her right to protect her sources, but was critical of her conduct as a journalist, particularly her decision to permit Libby to "hide administration responsibility for attacks on WMD critic Joseph Wilson by allowing [Libby] to change his pre-agreed attribution from 'senior administration official' to 'former hill staffer.'"

In slamming the award to Miller, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting's Jim Naureckas wrote, "By rewarding a reporter who was apparently collaborating with and protecting a powerful official [Scooter Libby] in an effort to punish the free speech of a government critic [Joseph Wilson], the SPJ is undermining, not advancing, the principles of the First Amendment."

Out of prison, Miller promised that once she returned to work she would cover "the same thing I've always covered—threats to our country."

Which means, we presume, she'll be covering the White House. ■

Letters

Another School Is Possible

Of all the things not to like about No Child Left Behind, it's a shame that Linda Baker picks on school choice ("All for One, None for All," October 24). Declaring that choice leads down the slippery slope to social ruin sounds too much like the other anti-choice movement, and it is equally wrong.

No one, no matter the age, should be sentenced to daily immersion in a situation that doesn't work for her. Adults know this and act on it. Honorable as it may be to stay and fight the good fight, each person must be free to leave a relationship or a job when the time comes. Only those involved can decide when it is time to call it quits. Children are especially vulnerable in oppressive schools. It does no good to ascribe mean motives to those who are trying to do what's best for their children.

Alternative schools have nurtured many progressive movements in education. Unless we believe that there is only one way to educate children, unless we are ready to march all children in lock-step uniformity, we must leave room for different possibilities. Choice is one privilege that should be spread more widely, rather than further constricted.

Deborah Fink
Ames, Iowa

LINDA BAKER RESPONDS

I agree we shouldn't blame parents for trying to do what's best for their children. However, the goal of public education is to provide all children, regardless of race, income or their parents' ability to work the system with

equal access to high-quality schools. Until all schools are "schools of choice," open enrollment policies will only exacerbate educational inequities between the haves and have-nots.

I believe a better solution to the problem of low quality "oppressive" schools is to increase funding so that all public schools have the capacity to provide innovative learning options and electives to fit the needs of a diverse student population.

Stabilizing—and equalizing—public school funding will ensure a sustainable network of high quality neighborhood schools and mitigate the environmental and logistical problems associated with driving kids to schools across town.

Comparing school choice critics to anti-abortion activists is a logical fallacy. It is more accurate to consider the implications of introducing "choice" into the nation's social security system, or to examine the failures of a choice-based healthcare system, which has left hundreds of thousands of Americans without access to quality affordable care for their families.

Three Cheers for the Women

In These Times has done an excellent job of covering women in progressive politics, and that is in large part because of the articles Emily Udell has written of late. I think it's vitally important, even in 2005, to make covering women's issues a priority because countless disparities still exist in how women are treated in the workplace, at home, and yes, even in progressive organizations.

Even in the labor movement, where I've been working for

the past two years, white men still hold a majority of management positions and continue to make decisions for thousands of organized women, particularly in the service industries. That is slowly starting to change, but we desperately need to pick up the pace. I love that *In These Times* has made a point of talking about women who are making difference in progressive politics.

Without a visual road map of where we are headed, of how we want to see women represented, we will have a much harder time getting there.

I just wanted to let you know that your articles highlight-

ing women's achievements in the media and locally here in Chicago have really improved *In These Times*, and encourage me to keep subscribing.

Marnie Goodfriend
Chicago

The New New Testament

If I may impose upon your extraordinary hospitality yet again: I was on Jon Stewart's "Daily Show" on September 13, and arrived with a compendium of liberal crap I never wanted to hear again, and responses thereto. But I only



FIRE ON THE PRAIRIE



"Fire on the Prairie", a radio forum sponsored by *In These Times*, explores politics and ideas with progressive writers, thinkers and activists.

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had six minutes, and so never got the chance to read them out loud. For whatever it may be worth to you:

- "Give us this day our daily bread." Sure. I'll pay for it. Enjoy!
- "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Oh yeah? Anybody trespasses on me, and I'll cut them a new you-know-what.
- "Blessed are the peacemakers." Jane Fonda? Give me a break!
- "Love thy enemies." Arabs?
- "Blessed are the meek." You bet! I love them, too. I tell 'em to kiss my ass, and they'll kiss it.
- "No man can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and Mammon." Mammon, of course, is the god of greed and riches. And the hell I can't serve both God and Mammon. Look at Pat Robertson! He's as happy as a hog up to its ears in excrement!

*Kurt Vonnegut
New York*

CORRECTION

The first date in the timeline accompanying David Sirota's "Welcome to New Orleans" contained an error. In February of 2001 Bush proposed a "\$641 million cut to the Army Corps of Engineers," not a \$641 billion cut.

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DISCUSSION

I equate the word "Redskin" to the word "Nigger." Would the Washington team "honor" African Americans by calling their team The Washington Niggers? I think not! Growing up, "Redskin" was one of the kinder terms hurled at my fellow students and me. And yes, I grew up cheering Roy Rogers, the Lone Ranger and all other cowboys who fought to civilize this country and save it from the dastardly Indians!

Join the debate at the forum for "Accepting the Slurs."

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Bolivian presidential candidate, Evo Morales, speaks to a crowd of miners in the town of Huanuni on October 6, 2005.

PHOTO: NOAH FRIEDMAN-RUDOVSKY

U.S. Military Eyes Paraguay

Rumors of an American base raise fears that the United States is there to stay. *By Adam Saytanides*

IN JUNE PARAGUAY'S LEGISLATURE GAVE THE green light to the U.S. military for a series of 13 joint exercises to run through December 2006.

Then the rumors began appearing in the Latin American press: The United States was moving to establish a military base at Mariscal Estigarribia, a town in Paraguay just 124 miles from Bolivia's southeast frontier and within easy striking distance of Bolivian natural gas reserves, the largest in the Americas. Anywhere from 400 to 500 U.S. troops were said to be arriving.

In late July, Brazil reportedly launched military maneuvers along the Paraguayan border, a move seen as an expression of Brazilian discontent with Paraguay. More vocally, Brazil's foreign minister Celso Amorin drew a line in the sand: "Paraguay must understand that the choice is between Mercosur and other possible partners."

Brazil and Argentina lord over Paraguay in the Mercosur trading bloc with a dominant import-export

relationship. They don't want to see their leverage compromised if Paraguay gains preferred access to the U.S. market for its textiles (hinted at recently) and drops out of the Mercosur trade partnership.

But Bolivia has the most to fear from a U.S. military base in Paraguay. With national elections slated for December 5, the Andean nation is expected to become the next Latin American flashpoint. Since October 2003, widespread indigenous peasant uprisings have ousted two presidents. Quechua and Aymara Indians make up the majority of the Bolivian populace, and they're pressuring the central government to halt the forced eradication of coca cultivation and to nationalize the country's natural gas reserves. Evo Morales, presidential candidate for the Movement Towards Socialism, or MAS party, made a meteoric rise onto the international political stage by supporting these goals, in open defiance of Washington. Considered by many analysts to be

the frontrunner, Morales' main competition is former president Jorge Quiroga Ramírez, the preferred candidate of the United States.

Both the U.S. Embassy and Paraguayan President Nicanor Duarte Frutos emphatically deny plans for a U.S. base.

"There have been these joint exercises since 1943," Bruce Kleiner, U.S. press attaché in Asuncion, told *In These Times*. "The only difference is this time they authorized 13 at one time, for expediency."

Kleiner says U.S. military personnel have been given no special treatment, and no blanket immunity. The joint training exercises generally involve less than 50 personnel, and last for two weeks at a time. And he adds, "There are no U.S. military personnel at Estigarribia, and no exercises planned there."

The hand-wringing grew more intense in August, when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld arrived in Asuncion and met with Duarte Frutos, partly to discuss Cuba and Venezuela's "unhelpful" and growing influence in Bolivia. As a senior defense department official told reporters, "The challenge ... is to help the Bolivians steer this situation to a democratic outcome."

Rumsfeld's comments fueled suspicions that the United States was making a move to block Morales' rise to power, or at least stifle any move he might make to nationalize gas reserves at the expense of U.S. corporations. U.S. officials have also said that the three-borders region, where Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina meet, is home to financiers of Islamic terrorist groups, but presented no strong evidence to back this.

Jorge Ramon de la Quintana is a former Bolivian military officer who spent three years in the Defense Ministry conducting political analyses of national defense strategies. He says the confluence of all of these factors is ominous.

"I don't believe in the arguments being put forth by the Secretary of Defense or the Embassy in Asuncion," Quintana told *In These Times*. "The military presence in Paraguay reflects a series of perceived threats by U.S. Southern Command."

Quintana says the main motivation to invade Bolivia would be to stop the spread of socialism. With Hugo Chávez enjoying broad support internationally, and left-leaning presidents at the helm in Brazil (Lula da Silva) and Argentina (Néstor Kirchner), Washington is finding its backyard increasingly insubordinate and difficult to control. The last thing the State Department wants to see is Morales, a good friend of Chávez,

taking over. Strong socialist movements might develop next in increasingly unstable Peru and Ecuador. "This is the return of the Domino Theory," says Quintana.

But Paul Sondrol, an academic expert on Latin America at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, says all this talk of impending intervention is rubbish. "There are no designs on Bolivia's natural gas: it's an urban legend," he says. However, Paraguay does have a legitimate problem with outlaws in the tri-border area. According to Sondrol, Paraguayan military officers sell everything from weapons systems to hot Mercedes sedans on the black market here.

"Paraguay's democracy isn't stable, and it's probably getting worse," Sondrol said. "I'd guess Paraguay is asking the U.S. to come in as much as the U.S. is asking 'Can we send some troops down there?'"

Council on Hemispheric Affairs Director Larry Birns, a personal acquaintance of President Duarte, has backed off initial reports of the presence of 500 U.S. troops. He told *In These Times* there are no plans at this moment to build a big U.S. base in Paraguay, but he worried that the denials being issued sound identical to the ones that predicated an escalation of U.S. military activity at the airbase in Manta, Ecuador.

"Paraguay is interesting for what it could become," says Birns.

Bolivia's MAS party has been careful not to add to the chorus of shrill protestations. "Though I have heard many things, it's important to look at this with a cool head," says Álvaro García, Evo Morales' vice-presidential running mate. "I've seen no evidence to suggest they have an intention of setting up a base in Paraguay."

García says the information he's seen indicates that the airstrip at Estigarribia lacks the support infrastructure needed to become a full-blown military base, such as taxiways, hangars and barracks. However, he admits that the airfield's proximity to Bolivia's natural gas reserves is "worrying."

"But what gives us greater worry is, we don't know if this is merely joint exercises, or the beginning of establishing a greater presence or base," García said. He echoed, perhaps unwittingly, the sentiments of Argentine Nobel laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, who remarked: "Once the United States arrives, it takes a long time to leave ... and that really frightens me." ■

ADAM SAYTANIDES is a producer for NPR's *"Latino USA"* based in Austin, Texas.

Lasting Damage

After the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) published a July 2004 study that found one in six U.S. soldiers returning from Iraq suffered from major depression, general anxiety or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), many predicted those numbers would rise as the occupation continued. Those predictions came true on October 18 when *USA Today* released the Pentagon's internal assessment of injured troops returning from Iraq.

The Pentagon's assessment program—created after the first Iraq war in order to track instances of Gulf War Syndrome—found that more than one in four soldiers, or 50,000 plus, complained of physical or mental problems related to the war. That number, which only takes into account troops returning this year, is still more than three times higher than the Pentagon's official count of 15,220 wounded since the war's start. Of those 50,000, nearly 20,000 reported nightmares or unbidden war memories, and 3,700 worried that they might "hurt" someone else or "lose control." Almost 1,700 soldiers admitted to self-injurious or suicidal thoughts, and more than 250 had such thoughts "a lot."

In the July 2005 *Harper's* article, Ronald Glasser explained how advancements in both medical and armor technology have led to higher survival rates among U.S. soldiers, while at the same time sending injury rates soaring. Kevlar helmets, for instance, can prevent shrapnel from penetrating the skull, but soldiers who live through explosive blasts often later suffer symptoms of traumatic brain injury. In March, the *NEJM* released a paper noting that such "primary blast injuries are notorious for their delayed onset."

Glasser also noted that while soldiers injured in Iraq are currently taken care of by the Defense Department—which has an annual budget of \$600 billion—even- tually, they will be released to the care of an already overloaded Veterans Affairs (VA) system. Six out of seven VA centers visited by the General Accountability Office in 2004 said that "they may not be able to meet" the increased demand of PTSD treatments.

—Brian Cook

APPALL-O-METER

9.3 Holy Gunsmoke

If there are awards in hell for chutzpah in the commission of mortal sin, the late Father Ryan Erickson should win 'em all. Police have concluded that the Catholic priest, when assigned to St. Patrick's parish in Hudson, Wisc., killed two men—then presided at one of their funerals.

The motive behind the murders, committed in 2002, has not been wholly established, but it's believed that one of the men had confronted the priest about molesting boys. Following the murders, Erickson was transferred twice. After police questioned him last year, he hanged himself in front of the rectory of St. Mary of the Seven Dolours in Hurley, Wisc. Police found child pornography on Erickson's computer.

St. Patrick's parishioners remember Erickson as a strict traditionalist—one a bit, shall we say, obsessed with certain sins. According to the *City Pages*, a Minneapolis-St. Paul news weekly, Erickson routinely spoke against masturbation.

"Even Sunday Mass is not safe from the immodest dress of some devils," he wrote in one e-mail to his followers. "They come to read, give out Holy Communion, etc., looking like an advertisement. There [sic] immodest dress says to all present: I'm easy! Please go home and masturbate to my beautiful body. The sad thing is that some do."

8.1 Our Porn World

Chris Wilson, a Florida porn Web site administrator, was arrested in October, thanks in part to an innovative barter arrangement he made with U.S. soldiers defending freedom in

Iraq. Wilson's site, NowThat's-FuckedUp.com, purveys amateur photos and videos dudes have taken of their wives and girlfriends doing very naughty things. As Wilson explained to the *East Bay Express*, many of his site's visitors were military, who

often wrote to thank him for "bringing a little piece of the States to them."

Problem was, soldiers had a hard time using their credit cards to access the site. So Wilson gave them access in exchange for

gruesome pictures of dismembered or otherwise defiled Iraqi and Afghan corpses. The photos appear over jocular captions, such as "What every Iraqi should look like."

Wilson, of course, portrays the site as a bastion for free speech and the public's right to know. "It's an unedited look at the war from [the soldiers'] point of view," Wilson told the *Express*. "There's always going to be a slant from the news media. ... To me, it's just a more real look at what's going on."

0.8 Nice Try

Given what his fellow Republicans have been up to, you can't blame Georgia General Assembly Rep. David Graves for mounting a gutsy defense in his drunk driving case. According to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Graves was nabbed at a roadblock and charged with his second DUI in two years. Graves argued in court that under the Georgia Constitution he was immune from prosecution, since he was doing legislative business—having dinner with colleagues—when he got likkered up. The judge rejected Graves' defense.

—Dave Mulcahey



Laying the Groundwork

The inside/outside strategy of the PDA By Phoebe Connelly

THE ENDORSEMENT OF Steve Young for representative of California's 48th district by the Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), like his campaign, happened quickly.

His was the first endorsement by the nearly year-and-a-half-old organization, and came at the end of the group's first "Grassroots Strategy Day," held on the Sunday after the September 24 peace march in Washington, D.C.

Formed in July 2004, PDA is a national progressive political organization that operates as a federal Political Action Committee—meaning they work directly with federal electoral campaigns, and face strict restrictions on contributions. The group's key staffers came from Dennis Kucinich's presidential campaign, and it counts amongst its allies Howard Dean's Democracy for America.

At the September meeting, PDA members discussed an electoral strategy of endorsing candidates both strategically and with the support of local chapters, electing secretaries of states to ensure electoral reform and bringing the antiwar fight to the 2006 primary.

PDA hopes to combine grassroots energy with a clear progressive agenda—their "inside/outside strategy"—to transform the Democratic Party. In a July report to PDA members, National Director Tim Carpenter described the strategy this way: "Heat in the streets, media campaigns, demonstrations, petitions, and

other shows of public intent are linked to decision-makers on the inside." Their first prominent national campaign was the challenge to the Ohio vote count, during which they worked with both the Green Party and the NAACP. In January they held a "Counter-Inaugural Summit" in D.C., with a keynote speech by Rev. Jesse Jackson, Jr. The group has since worked to promote the antiwar movement and firm up an electoral strategy for 2006.

Young's endorsement is part of the group's commitment to the grassroots. "We agreed when we launched that we would be grassroots," says Kevin Spidel, the national deputy director. "You see other organizations making strategic decisions without the local chapters, and we've seen activists come over to PDA because of that." The group has 15 chapters in California, and Young's endorsement came at the request of those chapters. "One of our beliefs is to grow our activists and support whatever they want to do in the progressive political world," says Spidel.

Young, an attorney specializing in employment law, became involved with PDA after a fundraiser the group held in Laguna Beach in July. "Steve said he was interested in the work being done, expressed interest in progressive politics," says Marion Pack, Young's field director. "He jumped in with both feet to the race for the 48th congressional seat."

Young is running for the House seat vacated in August

by Republican Christopher Cox when President Bush appointed Cox chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Cox had held the seat in Orange County's largely Republican 48th district for 17 years. The special election was an open primary, with the top vote-getter from each party moving on to an election on December 6.

Young was the winner among Democrats in the October 4 special primary, but that isn't saying much. Of the 17 candidates in the primary, he finished fourth, with 8.7 percent of the vote. Young faces an uphill battle; not only was he beaten out by two Republicans, but also by the American Independent Party's Jim Gilchrist, who came in third with 14.7 percent of the vote. Gilchrist is the founder of the Minuteman Project, the vigilante group that organizes volunteers to patrol the U.S.-Mexico border for illegal immigrants.

At this point, PDA can offer Young and future endorsees its base of activists and its national profile. Pack says she knows at least three dedicated volunteers who joined Young's campaign after the PDA endorsement, and the entire PDA phone list was called for donations and support. Regardless of the outcome of this race, Pack takes the long view. "I think a lot more people will remain active," she says. "Steve is building a base right now; it will carry over to the next elections. [Because this is a special election] whoever is elected is going to face re-election in a year—if we don't win it this time, we'll go at it again. It's winnable. And we're going after it to win."

It remains to be seen how PDA will strike a balance between supporting more winnable campaigns and those that rise up from the grassroots. Young's campaign is



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE YOUNG FOR CONGRESS

particularly fraught: In 2004, 58 percent of voters in the 48th district chose Bush, and liberal senator Barbara Boxer also lost there by 8 percentage points. In contrast, PDA's second endorsement is going to progressive radio host Tony Trupiano, who recently announced his candidacy for Michigan's 11th congressional district seat. And

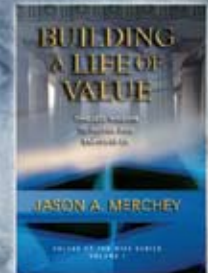
while the 11th district is arguably a winnable race—both counties in the district went for Kerry in 2004—the grassroots connection isn't as clear because PDA's presence in Michigan is still forming.

"I wouldn't call it a problem," says Spidel. "I would call it a situation we have to address." ■

**What do
Buddha,
Noam Chomsky,
Aristotle,
Einstein,
Helen Keller,
Mother Jones, and
Frederick Douglass
have in common?**

**Their religion? No.
Their politics? No.
Their gender or
time period or nation? No...**

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"Wow, I remember when all these trees were a parking lot."

Funding the Fundies

HHS issues new abstinence grants.

By Silja J.A. Talvi

OVER THE PAST FIVE years, the Bush administration's fixation on the no-sex form of sex education has put more than \$600 million into the coffers of abstinence-only programs. In mid-October, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families issued the latest batch of federal disbursements, totaling \$37 million.

Oddly, the grants for abstinence education are largely channeled to organizations helping females who have already become pregnant. Millions of dollars are going to dozens of so-called Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), of which there are now at least 3,200 in the United States. CPCs do not offer abortions and attempt to sway pregnant girls and women away from that choice through counseling that emphasizes the trauma of abortion and the killing of life. Among the dozens of CPCs on the most recent list of federal grant recipients is the Several Sources Foundation Center in New Jersey, a Christian organization that touts its "chastity" training for women who have already become pregnant, and boasts of having "saved" 15,000 children, presumably from abortion.

Such blurring of the line between church and state has mostly flown under the radar, with one exception. In August, HHS suspended funding to the Silver Ring Thing organization after it was sued in Boston. The ACLU argued that federal money was being spent to reward students who chose a "faith-

based version" of the program. Those students received fancy Bibles and silver rings engraved with a scriptural verse, while the "secular version" students were given rings engraved "waiting." Silver Ring Thing has already gotten more than \$1 million in federal dollars, and the funding is likely to be restored once "tweaks" to the program are in place.

Scattered throughout the grant list are a few abstinence-focused agencies developing curriculum for junior high and high school students, including the Illinois-based Abstinence and Marriage Education Partnership (\$800,000) and Virginia's Educational Guidance Institute (\$698,840). Both of these agencies have ties to the right-wing Heritage Foundation.

HHS appears to have caught abstinence-only fever itself. Earlier this year it unveiled a new Web site (4parents.gov), designed to help parents talk to their kids about sex. According to the Feminist Majority Foundation the site was designed with the help of National Physicians for Family Resources, a group with strong ties to right-wing organizations.

"Tell your son or daughter that the best way to avoid getting an STD is for them not to have vaginal, oral, or anal sex," the site instructs parents, "until they are in a mutually faithful, monogamous relationship, preferably marriage."

In other words, just wait until marriage, and you can have all the anal sex you want. Better than a silver ring, perhaps, but it's unlikely to be what the pro-lifers had in mind. ■

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BUILDING PEACE IN COLOMBIA WAS THE FOCUS of the international conference in Chicago where Orlando Valencia, an Afro-Colombian activist, was invited to speak about his community's struggle to defend its land from agribusiness interests and paramilitary forces. He never showed up.

Valencia was representing Jiguamiandó, a "peace community" that has declared itself neutral in the country's ravaging civil war and has no alignment with either right-wing paramilitary or left-wing guerrilla factions. Displaced by violence in 1997, the community won the right to return in 2000 under collective land rights granted to Afro-indigenous people. But during their absence the land had been illegally planted with African palm, as part of a large-scale palm oil export operation. Since then, the community has been struggling to claim their land while paramilitaries continue to protect the illegal agriculture, which poses a serious threat to the surrounding Choco rainforest.

A week before he was to leave for Chicago, Valencia was denied a visa, for the second time, by the U.S. Embassy in Bogota. Fed up with the process, he started the long trek back home. A group of fellow Colombians and international observers accompanied him.

At mid-day on October 15, the group was stopped by police in the Belén de Bajirá area, taken to a station, and several people, including Valencia, were isolated and questioned. Observers noticed that nearby, three known paramilitary members including an Afro-Colombian named "Dimas" waited in a white truck.

One of the observers overheard the police captain referring to Valencia as a "deserter" from the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), Colombia's main leftist guerrilla group.

After the group was released, the paramilitaries—who are widely known to be aligned with government forces—apparently followed them. As the group approached the end of their journey, the paramilitaries accosted them and kidnapped Valencia at gunpoint, telling the observers they would kill him on the spot if they couldn't take him with them. They set off with Valencia captive on a motorcycle, and despite the desperate efforts of activists and requests from the U.S. Embassy, he hasn't been heard from since.

In a country where union members, leftist sympathizers and other dissidents or peace activists are regularly killed by right-wing paramilitary forces, Valencia's friends and supporters fear the worst.

Johny Meneses, a Colombian taxi driver and union activist who has been living in Chicago and seeking asylum here, says he thinks the kidnapping was meant to send a message to the other Colombians participating in the "Partnering for Peace" conference, which took place October 21–23. Speakers included members of the

U'Wa indigenous group who have been fighting plans for petroleum extraction on their land, a co-founder of the Small Farmers Movement of Cajibío, women's rights activists and other Afro-Colombian representatives.

"It's a signal," Meneses says. "The paramilitaries definitely know what's going on in Chicago. When someone comes to conferences in the U.S. and denounces [the

An Activist Left Behind

By Kari Lydersen



COURTESY CHILD RIGHTS INFORMATION NETWORK

paramilitaries], they are in a lot of danger when they return."

Meneses and others noted that it is also striking that the kidnappers were not deterred by the presence of international observers.

"It's pretty scary in terms of the brazenness of it," says Martha Pierce, director of the Chicago Metro Sanctuary Alliance, one of the groups sponsoring Valencia's visit. "And the local officials don't seem to be taking it as seriously as we'd like."

Pierce says she was surprised that Valencia was denied a visa by the United States even though he had letters from conference organizers and an invitation to meet with Illinois Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky.

"The two things they were concerned about were his financial resources while he's here and whether he'll go back home," she says. "We assured them he was being sponsored by a group, so he wouldn't be a burden on U.S. taxpayers, and the expectation was that he would go home after about two weeks."

"If he'd overstayed his visa, would that have been as bad as him getting killed?" she asked. "The U.S. Embassy must have this on their conscience—or at least they should." ■

KARI LYDERSEN is a writer based in Chicago, and the author of *Out of the Sea and Into the Fire: Latin American-US Immigration in the Global Age*.



Capitol Report

How the Right Has Won

The GOP has perfected the art of gerrymandering to the point where one political scientist estimates the Democrats would have needed to win 57 percent of the vote nationwide to retake the House in 2004.

SOMETIMES SCHADENFREUDE JUST FEELS SO good. There's nothing like watching Tom Delay get nailed for money laundering, or, as *In These Times* went to press, placing bets on whether Karl Rove or Scooter Libby would be the first one frogmarched out of the White House. Bill Frist is under investigation for possible insider trading. And super-lobbyist Jack Abramoff's imbroglio—which involves Indian casinos, sweatshops, a gangland murder, a kosher deli and Ralph Reed—is simply breathtaking.

Even when Republicans should be running for political cover, they continue to operate with impunity. In the latest audacious example, the Republican leadership is proposing to offset the cost of Hurricane Katrina by slashing \$50 billion from Medicaid, food stamps and student loan programs. Yet they continue to push for another \$70 billion in tax cuts, including elimination of the estate tax.

Despite losing his title as majority leader, The Hammer still twisted arms on the House floor for the Gasoline for America's Security (GAS) Act. The bill—described by the Natural Resources Defense Council as a “grab-bag of polluter-friendly policies”—barely passed after the vote was held open for 40 extra minutes. Democrats in the chamber chanted “shame, shame,” but of course the Republican leadership has none.

Conventional wisdom says that to stay in power, a party must appeal to swing voters and the moderate middle. If the party veers too far right or left, the laws of political gravity should bring it down. But the Bush administration and radical right-wingers in Congress continue to gut programs supported by most Americans while lining the pockets of their corporate cronies without ever facing repercussions on Election Day.

How do they do it?

That's the question political scientists Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson examine in their excellent new book, *Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy*. They dispute that the country has become more socially conservative, arguing the preponderance of polling data shows that “if anything, public opinion has grown more centrist on such issues, and more tolerant of the divergent views, values and behaviors of other Americans.”

Off Center shows how the Republicans furthered their unpopular policies through a potent combination of centralization, misinformation, secrecy and “backlash insurance”—a variety of tactics used to keep wayward members in line while shielding them from

voter outrage. One of the most common forms is “catch and release,” in which the leadership allows moderates to vote their “conscience” as long as it won't threaten passage of a bill.

The end result—seen in the Bush administration's massive tax cuts, the energy bill boondoggle or the bloated Medicare prescription drug benefit—is that the right's political machine now has “the motive and the means to get into law major policies that few Americans support—and to shield themselves from the risk that millions on the losing end of the bargain will realize they've been had.”

Cracks in the GOP facade are starting to show—almost all of the “New Power Brokers” named in *Off Center* are either under investigation or indictment. But the right won't be easy to supplant. For one, the GOP has perfected the art of gerrymandering to the point where one political scientist estimates the Democrats would have needed to win 57 percent of the vote nationwide to retake the House in 2004.

So what can be done to break the Republican hegemony? The solution will not be to hope “that the masses will wake up and suddenly take an interest in politics,” Hacker and Pierson argue. “The problem is deeper. In our increasingly unequal society, in which government activity is not just extensive but extensively complex, voters have proved no match for a mobilized and coordinated conservative movement capable of managing the agenda and shaping and distorting the flow of information to citizens.”

Once upon a time, organized labor served as a crucial counterweight to the corporate right. Unions provided much more than a bigger paycheck for workers. As Hacker and Pierson remind us, “We often forget that they have always been crucial *political* actors, helping workers identify common issues, informing them about political and policy considerations, and shaping political debates.”

But Hacker and Pierson conclude that class still matters. “Since the 1950s,” they write, “the relation between income and party allegiance—with poor and working-class voters favoring the Democrats—has become stronger, not weaker.” The problem for Democrats is less about working people voting against their interests than not voting at all.

There's much talk these days about Democrats needing to come up with “new ideas” to slow the Republican juggernaut. Perhaps first they should dust off some old ones, like solidarity. ■

CRAIG AARON is the communications director of the national media reform group Free Press (www.freepress.net) and a senior editor of *In These Times*. The views expressed here are his own.



Give Me Cognitive Liberty

PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS OFFER ACCESS TO VARIED states of consciousness; restriction of this access is a fundamental form of repression. Consequently, the “war on drugs” is not just a campaign against the use of certain substances; it’s also an attack on “cognitive liberty,” or the right to control individual consciousness.

This argument has a libertarian pedigree, but there is a growing movement, concerned with expanded consciousness and cognitive liberty, that has adopted and adapted it.

“The so-called war on drugs is not a war on pills, powder, plants and potions,” argues Richard Glen Boire, founder and executive director of the Center for Cognitive Liberty & Ethics (CCLE) in the Summer 2000 edition of the group’s *Journal of Cognitive Liberties*, in what amounted to a manifesto for the group. Instead, he writes, “it is a war on mental states—a war on consciousness itself—how much, what sort we are permitted to experience, and who gets to control it.”

Established in early 2000 as a “nonprofit law, policy and public education center,” the CCLE was formed to advance the argument that true intellectual freedom includes control of one’s own awareness. The group defines cognitive liberty as “the right of each individual to think independently and autonomously, to use the full spectrum of his or her mind, and to engage in multiple modes of thought.”

By labeling this civil rights battle a “war on drugs,” Boire argues, the government is trying “to redirect attention away from what lies at ground zero of the war—each individual’s fundamental right to control his or her own consciousness.”

One of the most significant aspects of this war, he suggests, is the demonization of “entheogenic” (which means generating the divine within) substances thought to facilitate sacred experiences.

“Archaeological evidence suggests that humans have communed with visionary plants and potions for thousands of years,” he writes. “Peyote, for example, has been used for over 10,000 years. Mushrooms, of the Genus *Psilocybe*, were used to produce visionary states at least as early as 4,000 B.C.”

Many in the cognitive liberty camp connect the use of “entheogens” to “shamanistic” practices of the many indigenous peoples colonized by Europeans since the beginning of the 15th century. These practices reportedly provided direct access to sacred experiences, and threatened the clerical authority of the conquer-

ing powers. Thus, an attitude was born that not only criminalized but also demonized entheogens. This attitude has seeped into larger society, and now taints all substances that alter consciousness.

The drug war incorporates this irrational bias. In fact, that sub-rosa agenda helps explain why America’s drug warriors fail to heed evidence that their prohibitionist crusade has failed.

Not only have our antidrug policies not produced a drug-free society, they have endangered civil liberties, nourished a bullet-riddled underground economy and earned the United States the title of the world’s largest jailer. These policies have generated global cartels of drug dealers, inflamed racial animosities at home and diverted untold resources from productive social investments.

Even on its own terms, the drug war has been a flop; illicit drugs are more available and less expensive than before the war’s declaration.

The failure of this war is so spectacular, irrational motives must be driving it, says Boire. And he is on point with a growing movement of Americans. The contemporary trend—some have labeled it the “neo-shaman” movement—is a new wrinkle on the so-called New Age movement, with some psychedelics and ‘60s movement politics thrown in.

Included in their number are more than the “usual suspects” of graying hippies, New Agers and assorted bohemians. One of the groups leading the charge is the Council on Spiritual Practices, founded by Robert Jesse, a former vice president of the software company Oracle. Jesse’s group focuses on evoking “primary religious experiences” and believes many things can trigger these transcendent states, including fasting, meditation, prayer, yoga and entheogenic drugs.

The United States acknowledged the legitimacy of these substances in 1995 when Congress amended the American Indian Religious Freedom Act to allow the Native American Church the sacramental use of peyote in all 50 states. Devotees believe peyote allows the faithful to contact God without the need of an intermediary.

Governments, not just organized religions, fear that kind of independence, say advocates of cognitive liberty. But criminalizing people who use outlawed substances for spiritual exploration is a much bigger crime, they argue.

Even in my current, sober state of consciousness, their arguments make a lot of sense. ■

The failure of the drug war is so spectacular that irrational motives must be driving it.

SALIM MUWAKKIL is a senior editor at *In These Times*, a contributing columnist to the *Chicago Tribune* and a *Crime and Communities Media Fellow* of the *Open Society Institute*.



Back Talk *By Susan J. Douglas*

Missing Their Moment

Pelosi and the lugubrious Reid are reportedly meeting with mayors and governors to develop a strategy for 2006. But where are the meetings with actual people?

I RECENTLY RECEIVED A LETTER FROM NANCY Pelosi, my close personal friend. Well, at least the letter was addressed “Dear Friend.” If I sent the Democrats \$25 or more, I would be the lucky recipient of something not available in any store, anywhere—the “Democrats Fighting Donkey Lapel Pin! Exclusively Yours!”

The letter said that the “conventional wisdom here in Washington says that it’s better just to go along and get along.” But the Democrats were not going to do that, Pelosi insisted. “I am going to work hard and fight alongside Senator Reid and all the Democrats in Congress to make sure we are asking the tough questions” of John Roberts and other judicial nominees. Hmm, I guess that explains Reid’s instantaneous puckering up to Harriet Miers and the Democratic split on the Roberts vote.

The letter assured me that the Democrats will “ensure your rights are safeguarded.” Which Democrats? The increasingly Republican-lite Hillary Clinton, who, whatever her celebrity status, cannot win the presidency and has sold out on everything from the invasion of Iraq to abortion rights? John Kerry? Joe Biden? As compelling as the donkey pin offer was, I resisted temptation. The letter is now making its own contribution to Ann Arbor’s recycling program. When we have to turn to “The West Wing” to hear a sophisticated dismissal of intelligent design by a fictional presidential candidate, or fantasize about Geena Davis being president, we know just how bereft we are.

There have been the intermittent reports and think pieces about how the Democrats need an agenda, their own “Contract with America,” since people don’t seem to know what they stand for. Indeed, in my letter from Pelosi, the “demands” that were listed were all about rolling back the excesses of the Bush administration—saying no to privatizing Social Security, stopping cuts to veterans programs and the like. But where is the bold, pro-active agenda? To create one, they would do well to get out of Washington, fast, away from the consultants and politicians, and talk to everyday people. They would get an earful, and it would be ferocious.

The Democratic leadership seems somehow unable to grasp the huge gap in outrage between them and their base. Go anywhere, talk to people who are Democrats or, poor souls, progressives, and the sheer fury of everyday people, if it could be harnessed, would solve this winter’s upcoming energy crisis. People are not only enraged; they are also deeply worried.

Hurricane Katrina not only changed things for the Republicans—it changed things for Democrats too.

Katrina exposed the nation’s continuing failures to combat poverty and racism; it exhumed, from the ’70s, awareness of the country’s energy dependency and profligacy; it showed that we can move people in and out of a Big Ten football game more efficiently than out of the path of a storm; it showed that you actually need a functioning federal government; and it revealed our contempt for the elderly and the sick. (Indeed, we desperately need an 80-year-old rapper to proclaim “George Bush hates old people.”)

So, while it was fun to pop champagne corks when Tom DeLay was indicted, and when the networks, in mid-October, revealed the White House’s careful rehearsals with soldiers in Iraq for a supposedly “spontaneous” exchange with the president, the Democrats must see the implications of Katrina for them.

On the Sunday talk shows, various representatives of the party are urging, and taking, the oft-cited advice from Napoleon, “Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.” When is the last time we remember the Republicans doing this? It is this silence—that comes across as sheer cowardice—that is enraging people and could make a turn to a third party much more attractive to many more people. Pelosi and the lugubrious Reid are reportedly meeting with mayors and governors to develop a strategy for 2006. But where are the meetings with actual people? Where is Howard Dean’s barnstorming of the country, with town meetings everywhere, to get a reality check on the passion of the people?

In fact, it is that very passion that seems to scare the Democratic leaders. The Republicans have, in addition to demonizing “liberals,” succeeded in marginalizing the party’s own base in the eyes of its timid and compromised leaders as too fervent, too far to the left. This is no mean achievement given how much farther out of the mainstream the religious right is. How else can you explain the utter absence of Democratic leaders at the enormous antiwar march in late September?

Hurricane Katrina has created the moment for a true paradigm shift in American politics, because many Americans have actually become scared about what it means to have an eviscerated, dysfunctional federal government. That’s what Democrats would hear if they listened to their base, instead of shunning it as their own advisors have convinced them to do. If they miss the Katrina moment, it will go down as one of the biggest political blunders of the early 21st century. ■

SUSAN DOUGLAS is a professor of communications at the University of Michigan and co-author of *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined Women*.



Democrats: It's the War

ENDING THE WAR IN IRAQ IS RIGHT FOR A LOT of reasons. The war was unjustified, unnecessary and unprovoked. It is counterproductive, strengthening al-Qaeda and weakening the moral authority of the United States. It is deadly: Many Americans, and many, many more Iraqis, have been killed or injured as a result of the fighting. And it is costly: Well over \$250 billion in taxpayer funds have already been spent, with no end in sight.

It is also increasingly unpopular. For all these reasons, plus the increased spotlight that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita put on how much the war is draining resources desperately needed at home, Democrats should clearly call for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. If Democrats do not make this the centerpiece of their campaign in 2006, they risk repeating recent history, in which they failed to recover seats in the House and Senate.

National Democratic leaders have already tried, and tried again, to ignore the war, and it didn't work politically. During the 2002 election cycle, when Democrats felt they had historical precedent on their side—the president's party *always* loses seats in the mid-term election—the Democratic leadership in Congress cut a deal with the president to bring the war resolution to a vote, and appeared with him in a Rose Garden ceremony. "Let no light show" between Democrats and President Bush on foreign policy was the leadership's strategy, and it yielded a historic result: For the first time since Franklin Roosevelt, a president increased his majorities in both houses of Congress during a recession.

Then, in 2004, with the president vulnerable on the war, the Democratic Party again sacrificed the opportunity to distinguish itself from Bush. Members avoided the issue of withdrawal from Iraq in the Party platform, omitted it from campaign speeches and deleted it from the national convention.

Why is it an unconscionable political blunder to sweep the war and occupation of Iraq under the rug? Because the war is one of the most potent political scandals of all time, and it has energized grassroots activity all over the country.

President Bush led the country into war based on false information, falsified threats and a fictitious estimate of the consequences. His war and the continuing occupation transformed Iraq into a training ground for jihadists who want to kill Americans, and a cause célèbre for stoking resentment in the Muslim world.

Bush's war and occupation squandered the abundant good will felt by the world for America after our 9/11 losses. He enriched his cronies at Halliburton and other private interests through the occupation. And he diverted our attention and abilities away from apprehending the masterminds of the 9/11 attack. Instead, we are mired in an occupation which has already cost nearly 2,000 American lives and the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis.

The issue of the war clearly distinguishes what is wrong with Republican rule. Republicans in Congress won't extricate the United States from the quagmire the president has gotten us into. They have refused to investigate what role the White House played in manipulating pre-war intelligence. They refused to investigate the Downing Street memo. Democrats, on the other hand, mostly voted against the war: Two-thirds of House Democrats and half of Senate Democrats opposed the war in Iraq. Democrats can draw no clearer distinction with the president and the Republican Congress than over this war.

Every major poll confirms that the war is a loser for the president and his party. Consider one of the most prominent: The ABC/*Washington Post* poll, which has surveyed public opinion on the war regularly since March 2003. Responses to all pertinent key questions clearly show eroding support for the war. Support for the president's handling of Iraq has steadily fallen; belief that the war was worth fighting has fallen; belief that the number of U.S. casualties are an acceptable cost of the war has steadily fallen; belief that the war has contributed to U.S. long-term security has steadily fallen, and support for keeping forces in Iraq has steadily fallen. There are no exceptions to this trend.

Right is on our side, and public opinion is trending our way. In 2006, Democrats must break from the past and run on the issue of quick withdrawal of all troops from Iraq. The stakes are high: Unless Democrats stand for ending the war in Iraq, this country will not leave Iraq, and Democrats their minority status in Washington, for a long time to come.

Of course, no party can win votes on the strength of one issue. Ending the war in Iraq must be at the centerpiece of a campaign that includes standing for national health care and preserving Social Security. This is the constellation of issues with which Democrats can take back the country. ■

Unless Democrats stand for ending the war in Iraq, this country will not leave Iraq, and Democrats their minority status, for a long time to come.

DENNIS J. KUCINICH represents Ohio's 10th congressional district. Kucinich has authored and co-sponsored legislation to create a national health care system, preserve Social Security, and repeal the USA PATRIOT Act.

SEE NO EVIL



**How American businesses
collaborate with China's
repressive government.**

BY G. PASCAL ZACHARY

Everyone I meet is afraid. The chief executive of one of China's largest hotel groups is afraid to complain to the police about the hustlers who sell fake watches outside the lobbies of his hotels. A Buddhist who runs a network of factories is afraid to speak openly about the Chinese occupation of Tibet. A sports marketing official, one of the agents for China's basketball stars, is afraid to speak out against misguided policies of the national sports system.

WHAT IS UNUSUAL ABOUT THESE PEOPLE IS NOT that they are afraid; many people in China are. What is unusual about these people is that they are Americans doing business in China—some even doing business successfully. What they fear, of course, is the same thing that China's people fear: the arbitrary power of government.

For Americans doing business in China, it is a short step between fear and collaboration, as I recently found during a two-week visit to Shanghai and Beijing, the two leading destinations in China for American “expats.”

My first meeting in Shanghai was not with Americans, but with Chinese nationals working for them. On a Sunday afternoon I sat in a shiny Starbucks near the city's central park, tucked into the rear corner of the shop, drinking coffee with five young people (three men and two women) who each work for a large American company in China. They all agreed that working for an American company had benefits over employment with a Chinese company. There was more openness at work, more emphasis on performance and more room to take chances. But one thing was the same: If they were caught criticizing the government, or even breaking the petty rules that govern their social lives—such as the ban on meeting in formal associations that might touch on political and social issues—the American company would not intervene to help them.

A few days later, an American who used to work for Nike explains to me why he won't stick his neck out for the Chinese or even his own principles: fear of retaliation. The American has his own sports marketing company, organizes amateur basketball tournaments throughout China and even advises China's version of the NBA. He knows Yao Ming, star of the Houston Rockets, personally. When talk comes around to the poor performance of China's international basketball team, the American offers an explanation: China's government officials are ruining Yao Ming and

other top players by making them play year-round for China's national team, often sacrificing time for much-needed rest and skills building. The American knows of what he speaks, since he is the agent for the country's leading point guard who, like Yao Ming, is a victim of the government's sports policies.

I say that this is a shame, and the American agrees. But he isn't about to campaign for better treatment of these stars. In his office we are surrounded by posters of leading Chinese athletes. He points to a poster of Wang Zhizhi, a tall Chinese man who backed up Shaquille O'Neal last year for the Miami Heat. Wang rebelled against the Chinese government by refusing to play for the national team at last year's Olympics. He is now persona non grata, not only to the Chinese government, but the sports marketing establishment here. This American won't touch him, nor will anyone else, out of fear of antagonizing the Chinese government and losing lucrative deals.

Free speech be damned

The sports marketer is guilty of keeping his mouth shut. But other Americans actively assist the Chinese government in the maintenance of its repressive regime. Even as I talk to the sports marketer, Microsoft is concocting an Orwellian policy for its new Chinese version of MSN, a news site and search engine. Microsoft has decided (and publicly confirmed this summer) that anyone in China doing a search containing the words “freedom” or “democracy” will be shown a message explaining that those words are banned and the requested search query will not be processed.

Now, Microsoft is one of the richest companies in the world and its founder Bill Gates has spent billions of dollars on a foundation to reduce global inequalities in health and education. And yet his own company is so intimidated by China's government that terms basic to free expression are banned from its search engine.



A security guard stops photographers from taking pictures outside the Yahoo! internet office in Hong Kong.

SAMANTHA SIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

American collaboration gets even uglier than that, however. In September Internet company Yahoo admitted that its employees in China assisted the government in making a case against a dissident journalist named Shi Tao, jailed since April, apparently for revealing information about a crackdown by the Communist Party.

In response to a question about the journalist's fate at a Beijing Internet conference in September, Jerry Yang, an American co-founder of Yahoo, confirmed that his company had helped the Chinese government arrest and prosecute Shi Tao. Yang didn't give specifics, but Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based advocacy group, has said that Yahoo officials in China helped the government track Shi Tao down using the IP address from which he read his Yahoo e-mail account.

Yang said that Yahoo receives "a lot" of requests for information from the Chinese government. "I do not like the outcome of what happens with these things," he said. "But we have to comply with the law. That's what you need to do to stay in business."

That kind of pragmatic attitude might pass muster in the United States or Europe, where courts are independent and the line between business and govern-

ment is usually clear. But in China, the American who blithely assists the Chinese government is likely contributing to a heavy-handed injustice.

During my trip, American business people were fond of telling me that they could do more good being engaged with the Chinese than by openly complaining and taking the sort of adversarial position against government that is common in the United States. "The idea is to retain our credibility, our influence in China, so we can work behind the scenes for the right thing," the sports marketer told me.

Naturally, there is some truth to this. In Shanghai, I visited the home of an American who adopted Tibetan Buddhism as his religion some years ago. He first came to China in order to help rebuild monasteries and temples in Tibet that were damaged or destroyed during the '60s Cultural Revolution. His high-rise apartment in a fashionable part of Shanghai is festooned with Tibetan artifacts, and he is clearly pained by the hypocrisy of the Chinese government today, promoting Tibet as a tourist destination while at the same time repressing any authentic expressions by Tibet's people or religious leaders. And yet he tells me, "The price of getting to restore

Tibet's cultural heritage is staying silent about China's true aims."

When I bluntly respond that he is a collaborator in China's occupation, he nods his head sadly and says he is "re-signed" to China's domination of Tibet. Speaking out on Tibet would only draw the scrutiny of the Chinese government and, of course, doom his growing business of supplying low-priced manufactured goods to American chain stores.

Profits not worth the price

Another troubling part about the collaboration of American business with the Chinese government is that, even in narrow business terms, it is failing. The terms of trade between the United States and China are ever-worsening. Chinese goods are flooding into the country, and manufacturing jobs are still flowing out of the United States and into China. U.S. exporters are selling an impressive \$3.5 billion worth of goods per month to China—twice the amount of goods exported from the United States to China five years ago, and nearly ten times the amount of 15 years ago. But Chinese exporters to the United States are doing even better: Sales topped \$20 billion per month this summer, and show no signs of slowing down. The trade deficit in merchandise with China topped \$100 billion in 2002, \$124 billion in 2003 and \$160 billion last year. This year, the deficit will approach a whopping \$200 billion.

To be sure, the growth in China's domestic economy offers plenty of opportunities for U.S. companies. For years, spending on China's infrastructure has been rising, and now consumer spending is exploding. An estimated 350 million Chinese—more than the population of the entire United States—spend \$10 per month on cell phone services alone. For an American company, success in China, even with products that are made in China, can be the difference between survival and failure. Witness, for instance, the great boost that ailing General Motors has had in China, where its cars are top-sellers.

On the other hand, Chinese copycats—stealing everything from movies and software to plans for machinery and chip-making equipment—take un-

fair advantage of the relative openness of American companies. The Chinese are also frantically trying to nurture home-grown businesses that can compete with the best from America. At the same time, the Chinese government has held down the value of its own currency, making it cheaper for American companies to invest in China—and cheaper for American consumers to buy imported Chinese goods. While recently the country slightly raised the value of its currency (and may do so again periodically), most observers think that China's currency will remain artificially low, or "cheap" in economic terms, for many years to come.

Because of the complex economic dance between China and the United States, the combination of fear and collaboration is a toxic brew for even well-intentioned Americans doing business in the country. As the *New York Times* editorial page opined recently, "Because China is too lucrative a market to resist, American and European businessmen have ended up endorsing the party line through their silence—or worse. They are not molding China; China is molding them." In short, "constructive engagement" with China is a myth.

Some senior American executives of

leading multinational corporations privately fret that their Chinese experiment will end badly, and not the least because they recognize that their investments in China have helped prop up an authoritarian regime that may be incubating social revolution or worse. Underneath the seemingly stable surface, dissent and unrest in China is rising. Even statistics from the government's own police force show a troubling trend: The number of mass protests reached 74,000 last year, compared to 10,000 in 1994.

With hundreds of unreported protests now taking place in China each week, far-sighted American executives are beginning to ponder what will happen to their investments if China implodes. One chief executive of a Fortune 500 company told me after I returned from China that he has a wait-and-see attitude, but feels increasingly doubtful that constructive engagement with China will bear fruit.

"We're capitalists and supposed to be running a business for a profit," he says. "So you don't want to leave a big market. On the other hand, China has serious political problems and the Chinese people lack basic freedoms. I'm not in China to solve the political problems, but if they aren't solved, foreign compa-

// Because of the complex economic dance between China and the United States, the combination of fear and collaboration is a toxic brew for even well-intentioned Americans. //

nies are either going to get kicked out of China, ultimately, or leave."

So, how should Americans respond to this situation?

First, Americans ought to squarely face their striking cycle of dependency with China, its government and economy. The U.S. government's huge deficits are partly financed by the Chinese government, which, through state-owned banks, buys U.S. Treasury bills with profits generated from exporting goods to the American market and the savings of ordinary Chinese citizens. The Chinese don't need to invest all or even a large part of their savings in their own country because American banks and corporations (as well as European and Japanese businesses) are willing to finance a great deal of the capital needed for the expansion of China's economy. Foreign investors do this because they believe that investment opportunities in both public infrastructure and private enterprise are better in China than in their own countries, and besides, European and North American investors are awash in cash anyway. The Chinese government makes investing in China even more attractive to foreigners by holding down the value of its currency, the yuan.

Ultimately, however, the Chinese end up holding a huge amount of U.S. dollars, leaving them vulnerable to sharing the pain of any American economic setbacks, such as steeper declines in the value of the dollar. Moreover, because America is the largest, most lucrative market for Chinese-made goods, China's

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Chinese staff attend the opening ceremony for the newly-opened Wal-Mart supercenter in Shanghai on July 28, 2005.



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'Law Is Dead'

Pressure to enforce China's one-child policy has led to horrific crimes by local governments

BY JEHANGIR S. POCHA

IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR CHEN Guangcheng to come to Beijing. The blind social activist from Linyi, in China's eastern Shandong province, needed a friend to hold his hand and help him navigate China's overcrowded bus and train systems as he made the six-hour trip to the nation's capital.

But the journey back was even harder. Within days of arriving in Beijing, on September 6, Chen, 34, was ambushed on the street by plainclothes security officers from Shandong, who bundled him into a car and took him back to Linyi. There, Chen found himself under *de facto* house arrest, where he still remains. No charges have been filed against him and Shandong officials did not respond to requests to clarify Chen's status.

"It was like a kidnapping," says Jiang Tianyong, 34, a Beijing-based lawyer who is part of the legal team representing Chen *pro bono*. "We knew he was abducted by Shandong officials even though they have no jurisdiction in Beijing because some people recognized the officials among the men who attacked Chen. They wanted him out of Beijing, but mainly they just wanted to punish him."

Chen's immediate crime took place during his stay in Beijing, when he complained bitterly to sympathetic central government officials, journalists and other activists about what he called a "bizarre" local government program in Shandong that was enforcing China's one-child policy by illegally forcing pregnant women to have abortions.

"It is a crazy and merciless situation," Chen told *In These Times*, just days before he was abducted. "Recently no one was really enforcing the one-child policy. But as the population in Shandong has ballooned, I think the provincial government put pressure on local family planning departments that have just gone nuts."

Chen said more than 120,000 people in Shandong alone have been forced to

undergo forced abortions and sterilizations over the past few months. Though China's National Population and Family Planning Commission has said this figure is exaggerated, in a rare admission, the commission's spokesperson, Yu Xuejun, admitted that "some persons concerned in a few counties and townships of Linyi did commit practices that violated the law."

"The responsible persons have been removed from their posts," Yu added, without giving any specific details.

Zhu Hong Ying, 40, and her husband, Xia Jian Dong, 40, are farmers in Zhai Tian Zhuang village near Linyi. The couple, who already have one son, say they first heard of the forced abortions in March, when Zhu was five months pregnant.

"We panicked and ran into [Linyi] to hide," Zhu said during an interview that had to be conducted on the telephone as local police had sealed off her area in the wake of Chen's detention. "But to get to us, about a month after we left, they arrested three of my sisters-in-law. So we felt very guilty and went home."

Zhu says what happened next went beyond her deepest fears.

"The people from the family planning department were waiting for us. They demanded RMB700 (about \$90, two months wages for Zhu) to release my sisters-in-law and then they pushed me into a van and took me to a local family planning clinic."

According to Zhu, a group of eight people surrounded her and harangued her to have an abortion.

What they were doing was illegal, as Chinese law stipulates that only financial penalties can be levied against parents who break China's 25-year-old one-child policy. The policy, though

"One of my clients is an unmarried woman from [a central Henan province] who was aborted at seven months because it seems the authorities took it upon themselves to decide a single woman had no right to have a baby," an activist lawyer in Beijing said, as he spread pictures his client and her partner had taken of their aborted fetus across his table. "Look at this, is this abortion or murder?"

harsh, is aimed to stabilize China's population of 1.3 billion at around 1.6 billion by 2050. Under the policy, Chinese families can have only one child, except ethnic minorities, who can have three children, and farmers, who can have two children if their first child is a daughter.

But Zhu says there was no way for her to protest.

"I just kept sobbing and begging but no one listened," she says. "Finally I was so weak I just said 'yes.' Then a doctor came in and gave me an injection in the stomach. After I took the shot, the whole day I didn't feel anything. The second day, in the early morning, blood and water all flowed out of me. Then the baby came out, but it was dead. It was a boy."

Zhu says gazing at her dead son was the most heartbreaking moment of her life. But there was no time to dwell on her emotions.

Xia says a nurse came into the room

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Symbol of the System

What do you get when you cross gutted labor laws with a corporate culture of impunity? Why, Wal-Mart, of course!

BY CHRISTOPHER HAYES

THERE'S A MOMENT IN ROBERT Greenwald's new documentary, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, that serves as a perfect metaphor for the entire battle between organized labor and the country's largest private employer.

Josh Noble, an employee of the Tire and Lube Express division of a Wal-Mart in Loveland, Colorado, is attempting to organize 17 of his fellow workers into a union. As the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election approaches, we see Noble with a United Food and Commercial Workers' (UFCW) advisor going through the list of employees, discussing who's with them and who's not. Noble says it looks about 50/50. Later, the organizer cautions Noble that he may have lost the vote of his friend Alicia. "No," Noble says. "I've talked with her quite a bit. She's just kind of hard to read ... I hang out with her on the weekends. But she's definitely into it. She's real strong." Cut to: Alicia Sylvia in her car. Management's putting the squeeze on and she's now equivocating. We know what will happen. It's like watching David sent out to battle Goliath, blindfolded. Without a sling.

When election day finally rolls around Noble loses the election—17 to 1.

It's not just that Wal-Mart has been winning the ongoing fight with the UFCW, which has been trying to organize the bulk of the company's 1.2 million employees for the last six years. It's that its dominance has been so absolute that even the small victories

the union has scored have proved to be Pyrrhic. In 2000, when seven of 10 butchers in a store in Jacksonville, Texas, voted to join the UFCW, Wal-Mart responded by announcing that henceforth it would sell only pre-cut meat in all of its supercenters, fired four of the union supporters and transferred the rest into other divisions. (Three years later, the NLRB ruled the decision illegal. Wal-Mart is now appealing.) And in May this year, when workers at a store in Jonquiere, Quebec, voted to unionize, Wal-Mart simply shut the place down. "They wanted to send a message to every other store," says UFCW spokesperson Chris Kofinis, "Don't you dare unionize."

By any means necessary

There's little secret to Wal-Mart's success. The company will simply do whatever it takes to keep workers from organizing. "Staying union free is a full-time commitment," reads one of the company's training manuals. "[F]rom the Chairperson of the 'Board' down to the front-line manager ... [t]he entire management staff should fully comprehend and appreciate exactly what is expected of their individual efforts to meet the union free objective."

Managers are trained to call a special hotline at the first sign of suspicious behavior, including "employees talking in hushed tones to each other." After the call, the company's notorious labor relations division headquartered in Bentonville, Arkansas, will swing into gear, often dispatching a company jet to the afflicted store, bearing members of its crack team of union busters. Management will convene mandatory meetings with each associate and screen anti-union videos.

Former managers, like Stan Fortune, who worked for Wal-Mart for 17 years and then went to work for UFCW, say the store also illegally follows union sympathizers and spies on its employees with cameras in break rooms. "One of their favorite tactics is to say, 'We need to freeze all raises in the store because it can't appear that we're bribing anybody,'" Fortune says in the film.

And then Wal-Mart will find a way to get rid of troublemakers. That's what spelled

the end of Fortune's career as a manager at the company. In 2001 Fortune was managing a Wal-Mart in Weatherford, Texas, when his boss instructed him to fire an employee suspected of talking to the union. "I told him 'I'm not firing him,'" Fortune says. "'That's illegal' ... He got in my face and said, 'You fire him or I'm going to fire you.'" A week later, Fortune was gone. "I filed for unemployment and the state found I was fired without cause. That's when I found out that means nothing in the real world."

Since 1999 the UFCW and others have filed more than 300 charges against Wal-Mart with the NLRB, accusing the company of, among other transgressions, firing employees for suspected union activity in violation of the Wagner Act. In a third of these cases, the local NLRB office has issued a formal complaint and attempted to prosecute the company, but it hardly matters to the behemoth because even if the full NLRB rules against Wal-Mart, the resulting penalties are a pittance. Wal-Mart didn't return calls for comment, but generally they deny ever breaking the law.

In April, the UFCW threw in the towel and decided to start from scratch. Instead of seeking to organize workers store by store, it launched WakeUpWalMart.com, a public awareness campaign designed to educate the public about Wal-Mart's business impact and negative community effects. A coalition led by SEIU, Democracy for America and the Sierra Club has launched a similar project called WalMartWatch.com.

Cause or effect?

Wal-Mart deserves just about all the bad press it gets, and its recent commercials stressing what a gosh-darn great place it is to work would suggest that these efforts are having some effect. But because there's been so much focus on Wal-Mart's misdeeds, it's easy to surmise that the company is a kind of outlier, and that the rest of corporate America would never stoop to such techniques. This is simply not the case. "The right to organize in the United States is on the verge of extinction," says Andy Levin, director of the AFL-



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A union member wears a
mock employee's vest.

MIKE SIMONS/GETTY IMAGES

CIO's Voices@Work campaign. "Wal-Mart's not a bad apple—it's the very symbol of a rotten system."

A book-length report on U.S. labor practices released by Human Rights Watch in 2000 found that "workers' freedom of association is under sustained attack in the United States, and the government is often failing its responsibility under international human rights standards to deter such attacks and protect workers' rights." Certifying a new union local through an NLRB election, which requires emerging victorious from several months of active campaigning by employers, 75 percent of whom hire union-busting firms, has become so difficult that unions hardly even bother anymore.

"If you look at the historical trends, 50 years ago, an average of 500,000 workers formed unions through the NLRB process every year," says Levin. "And the number of workers whose rights were violated in that process, according to the NLRB, was generally in the high hundreds or low thousands. Fast forward to today. The private sector workforce is twice as large, but the number that organized through elections last year was 80,000. The number of workers whose rights were violated, according to the NLRB, is over 20,000. And that's literally the tip of the iceberg. Most people's rights are violated probably before there's a union on the scene to file a complaint."

Employers don't have to break the law to be effective. They can legally require supervisors to actively campaign against the union upon pain of termination and they can require employees to attend one-on-one pressure sessions with their bosses. "No other industrialized democracy allows this," says Levin. But even if they do break the law there are no punitive damages or large fines. In fact, employers simply have to give back pay minus what the fired employee was making

at his or her subsequent job. "Many employers have come to view remedies like back pay for workers fired because of union activity as a routine cost of doing business," says the Human Rights Watch report. "As a result, a culture of near-impunity has taken shape in much of U.S. labor law and practice."

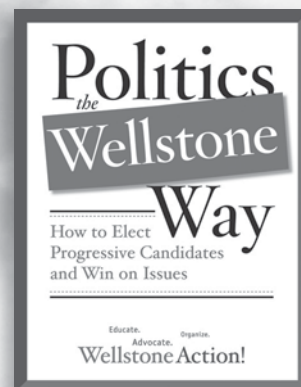
For several years, Levin and others at the AFL-CIO have been attempting to build support for legislation that would chip away at this "culture of near-impunity." The Employee Free Choice Act, which currently has 204 sponsors in the House and 40 in the Senate, would legally recognize a bargaining unit if a simple majority of workers signed a card endorsing unionization. It would also create binding arbitration for the first contract a newly certified union negotiates, and increase penalties for employer violations. Similar legislation has come close to passing in the past, but has often fallen victim to filibusters from corporate friendly senators.

Such legislation isn't necessary in countries where workers' rights are already protected. In Germany, Wal-Mart has bought out several stores that were already unionized, and they have stayed unionized. Since Wal-Mart isn't in the charity business, it's safe to assume those stores are quite profitable. In the film, Greenwald interviews workers there who proudly speak of health benefits and six weeks of paid vacation. One woman says she doesn't understand—why can't her American colleagues form a union?

It's a damn good question. ■

Research assistance for this article was provided by Robert Greenwald, the producer/director of Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price. In an unprecedented journalistic collaboration, The Nation, The American Prospect and AlterNet will also tackle stories and themes showcased in the film—visit www.alternet.org/walmart on November 7 to read them all.

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The Lay of Labor's New Land

As the Change to Win Federation takes shape, questions about how it will co-exist with the AFL-CIO remain.

BY DAVID MOBERG

AFTER A YEAR OF TURBULENT debate and division at the top, America's unions are adjusting to a new organizational landscape while still grappling with the same old challenge: how to grow and gain power. With the founding of the Change to Win Federation (CTW) in late September, the summer split of the AFL-CIO took firmer shape, but its ultimate impact is still up in the air.

Despite the schism, there is pressure on leaders from both sides to cooperate. CTW is a new, not a rival, federation, insists Laborers' union president Terry O'Sullivan, who doesn't want "differences of opinion [to] lead to the dismantling of the labor movement." But there is also a new edge to the competition to organize between the non-rivals.

"This is more change than the labor move-

ment has seen in 30 years," UNITE HERE (hotel and textile workers) president Bruce Raynor said on the eve of the September 27 CTW convention in St. Louis, an enthusiastic one-day pep rally celebrating organizing campaigns. But Raynor said he also anticipated big changes in the AFL-CIO. Indeed, in October the AFL-CIO launched the first of its industry coordinating committees to develop a common strategy for 10 unions in the arts, entertainment, media and telecommunications industries.

The changes in Change to Win

It's clear that Change to Win—with about 5.4 million members in seven unions, compared to 9 million among the 52 unions still at the AFL-CIO—will be a different kind of labor federation. It will devote three-fourths

of its relatively small, \$16-million budget to organizing, employing minimal staff and no full-time officers. The AFL-CIO currently has income of roughly \$100 million, and has budgeted \$22.5 million for organizing. But five CTW unions have left the AFL-CIO and the Laborers are soon to follow, which leaves only the Farmworkers in both federations. This shift will force major adjustments to the AFL-CIO.

When AFL-CIO president John Sweeney took office a decade ago, he tried to strengthen the labor movement in part by beefing up the AFL-CIO itself and greatly expanding the executive council. By contrast, only the seven union leaders (with three additional diversity representatives) will directly govern Change to Win. The group's new president, Anna Burger of SEIU, and its secre-

tary-treasurer, Edgar Romney of UNITE HERE, are, respectively, the first woman and first African-American to hold such high labor offices.

CTW unions claim that collectively they will spend \$750 million a year on organizing, which by conventional standards should yield about 750,000 new members a year (compared to 500,000 or fewer for all unions in recent years). Yet there are reasons to be skeptical that they will actually spend that much.

Indeed, current CTW union commitments to—and success in—organizing vary greatly. SEIU and UNITE HERE spend more than half their international budgets for organizing, but the Teamsters and UFCW (food and commercial workers) have much more modest programs. With the exception of SEIU—which has made its biggest gains in the public sector—all of the other CTW unions have been unable to organize more new members than they lose to offshoring and other employment cutbacks every year, an indication of the challenge CTW faces.

Don't mourn, organize

But the new CTW Strategic Organizing Center, led by savvy organizer and SEIU Vice-President Tom Woodruff, intends to launch large-scale organizing campaigns that target major employers or industries, involve one or more of the affiliated unions, and even take on a global scope. For example, a new SEIU campaign with Union Network International, a global service union federation, aims to organize security guards employed by two dominant transnational companies, Securitas and Securicor, which owns Wackenhut. CTW plans to launch new campaigns at major employers as well as support ongoing efforts that target big employers, regions or industries in a single campaign, such as drives to organize janitors, school bus drivers, security guards, hotel employees, industrial laundry workers and health caregivers.

Woodruff says CTW's main target will be the 44 million workers who are currently unorganized in "jobs that can't be offshored or digitized," in industries such as food preparation, health care, transportation and general services. Improving such low-wage jobs, Woodruff argues, will "create a new middle class in this country."

Unlike the AFL-CIO, the Strategic Organizing Center will have the authority, funds and experienced organizers to launch large-scale, new campaigns with individual unions that support each other. "The organizing

campaign of one union is the organizing campaign of every union," Woodruff said. And Raynor promised that "we will stand up at crucial moments with massive support of each union," such as the support Chicago janitors and Teamsters recently pledged to give Houston janitors seeking a union.

Despite earlier CTW proposals, there is not likely to be a major conventional effort to organize Wal-Mart workers. Instead, CTW officials will step up their criticism of Wal-Mart's practices and support a new loose association of Wal-Mart workers in the United States, while backing existing union organization in Canada, Korea and other countries.

Organizers from both CTW and the AFL-CIO unions agree that the secret to union growth is, in Woodruff's words, "to get the employer out of the way." For example, the Communications Workers (CWA), with longtime organizer Larry Cohen as its new president, is now signing up what may be 20,000 new members at Cingular Wireless—a result of having earlier negotiated an agreement by Cingular to recognize the union when a majority of workers sign up.

The AFL-CIO continues to promote legislation that would facilitate organizing and has called for major actions on December 10, International Human Rights Day, while the CTW unions seem likely to rely more on winning employer neutrality either through direct pressure or forging mutually beneficial relationships. At the CTW convention, SEIU president Andy Stern argued that labor has often failed because "we've had a very class-struggle strategy. In the new economy we need partnerships with employers where 'Team America' has a plan for building the American economy."

Cooperation or competition?

But the immediate concern for many local union leaders was whether there could be a "Team Labor" after the split. After months of conflict, SEIU and AFSCME ultimately signed an agreement to cooperate on organizing home care workers, but Teamsters in Chicago have initiated raids on two different AFL-CIO affiliated unions. On the Gulf Coast, both federations launched somewhat different but non-competitive hurricane relief programs.

Most important, however, has been resolving the question of how locals from unions that leave the AFL-CIO can participate in the politically important central labor councils and state labor federations. Sweeney first

“Change to Win’s main target will be the 44 million workers who are currently unorganized in ‘jobs that can’t be offshored or digitized,’ in industries such as food preparation, health care, transportation and general services.”

ruled that they couldn't participate, then offered them the option of special "solidarity charters," but the disaffiliated unions rejected the terms. Local union leaders feared that failure to reach a resolution would likely hurt all unions and progressive politics.

"The two parties—leaders of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win—must find a way for unionists to work together at the state and local level," says Cleveland Federation of Labor leader John Ryan, who blames the split for one primary loss already. "As every week goes by, the urgency increases, and the importance of having people work together becomes so clear in every way."

By mid-October, there appeared to be agreement that CTW unions with solidarity charters would cooperate on programs of the state and local groups, including mutual no-raiding agreements, and could run members for office. The last sticking point concerned how much the new solidarity charter locals would pay to support the costs of both programs and their administrative support.

The debate about whether Change to Win needed to leave the AFL-CIO to pursue its laudable organizing objectives is over. Now the question is whether the two federations can cooperatively pursue separate strategies toward a common goal. Stern says that CTW unions will never return to the AFL-CIO, but leaves open the possibility for a new unified labor organization. In the meantime, it appears that at least unity on the local level may be preserved, and that will make leaders like John Ryan a little bit happier. ■



PHOTO: DREAMSTIME.COM

THE DRUG WAR: JUST SAY NO

THREE PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICA'S DISASTROUS DRUG POLICIES

A Foul Tragedy

Democrats fled in the face of danger

BY GARRISON KEILLOR

We Democrats are at our worst when we try to emulate Republicans as we did in signing onto the “war” on drugs that has ruined so many young lives.

The cruelty of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 is stark indeed, as are the sentencing guidelines that impose mandatory minimum sentences for minor drug possession—guidelines in the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act that sailed through Congress without benefit of public hearings, drafted before an election by

Democrats afraid to be labeled “soft on drugs.” As a result, a marijuana grower can land in prison for life without parole while a murderer might be in for eight years. No rational person can defend this; it is a Dostoevskian nightmare and it exists only because politicians fled in the face of danger. That includes Bill Clinton, under whose administration the prosecution of Americans for marijuana went up hugely, so that now there are more folks in prison for marijuana

than for violent crimes. More than for manslaughter or rape. This only makes sense in the fantasy world of Washington, where perception counts for more than reality. To an old Democrat, who takes a ground view of politics—*What is the actual effect of this action on the lives of real people?*—it is a foul tragedy that makes you feel guilty about enjoying your freedom.

If suddenly on a Friday night the red lights flash and the cops yank your

teenage son and his little envelope of marijuana into the legal meatgrinder and some bullet-headed prosecutor decides to flex his muscle and charge your teenager—because he had a .22 rifle in his upstairs bedroom closet—with a felony involving the use of a firearm, which under our brutal sentencing code means he can be put on ice for 20 years, and the prosecutor goes at him hammer and tong and convinces a passive jury and your

boy's life is sacrificed so this creep can run for Congress next year—this is not your cross alone to bear. If the state cuts off your right hand with a meat cleaver on my account and I don't object, then it is my cleaver and my fingerprints on it.

I don't dare visit Sandstone Federal Prison here in Minnesota for fear of what I'd see there: People who chose marijuana, a more benign drug than alcohol, and got caught in the religious war that

we Democrats in a weak moment signed onto. God help us if we form alliance with such bullies as would destroy a kid's life for raising cannabis plants.

GARRISON KEILLOR IS the host and writer of "A Prairie Home Companion," now in its 26th year on the air. This adapted excerpt from Keillor's book, *Homegrown Democrat*, is printed by arrangement with Viking, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Breaking Rank

Former Seattle police chief Norm Stamper takes on the drug war

BY SILJA J.A. TALVI

In 1999 Norm Stamper made international news in a most inglorious way, as the police chief of the Seattle Police Department during the WTO-related demonstrations. For this 34-year veteran police officer with a Ph.D. in behavioral psychology, it was not his proudest moment.

Stamper's resignation and retirement from the force followed shortly thereafter. He moved to a cabin in Washington's San Juan Islands and began to write a book that would put him in a different kind of spotlight altogether, as an advocate for the legalization of drugs and prostitution, as well as a critic of racism, sexually predatory behavior and the prevalence of domestic violence within police departments.

Breaking Rank: A Top Cop's Exposé of the Dark Side of American Policing is a startling and often shockingly raw account of the uglier truths of policing in America. "With each new badge, each new phase of learning," he writes, "I developed a deeper and keener understanding of this: the most intractable problems of my field—racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia and other brands of bigotry, fear, brutality, corruption, organizational ineptitude, even individual incompetence—are rooted in the system of policing, a system that includes the laws police are called upon to enforce."

In *These Times* recently spoke with Stamper in Seattle.

When did you first start thinking about decriminalizing or legalizing illicit substances? And what got you thinking about this in the first place?

These are concepts I've had in mind since the '60s and '70s. Especially in the case of drugs, I've always believed that these kinds of

"crimes" have to be challenged, and that we have to be willing to look at the high price that we are paying—psychically and physically—as officers, in continuing to enforce these laws against individuals.

If I choose to inject, inhale, sniff, snort, or for that matter, put a bullet in my brain, that's a choice I should have as an adult. Where the line is drawn for society is if I choose to be irresponsible in committing those acts. Then I need to be held accountable for my behavior. For instance, if I furnish a kid with drugs, or if I abuse a spouse, then I need to be held accountable for my criminal actions.

The hypocrisy of keeping the prohibition on these substances going, yet making no moves to ban alcohol as a choice for adults, is staggering. We know there are far greater problems associated with alcohol abuse. Just as with alcohol, though, I think it should be viewed as a basic civil liberty for people to be able to use whatever drugs they want, and second, to treat the abuse of drugs as a medical problem, which is what it is. It is a public health issue, not an issue for the law to deal with.

But you can't deny the fact that some drugs, such as crystal meth, really are more dangerous than others.

Yes, that's true. Some drugs are more dangerous than others. We know people are doing meth, and that can be a very damaging and addicting drug. But if we start looking at the potential damage caused by any drug—and on that basis say "Outlaw it and all other drugs like it"—then we get this sort of twisted logic that says you have a right as an adult to do whatever you want to and put whatever you want in your body, *except* this substance or that substance. It doesn't make sense for

us to dictate those exceptions. It makes sense for us to provide education, information and treatment, but not to tell people, by law, what not to put in their bodies. That approach has clearly proven not to be effective.

How have other members of law enforcement—including other police chiefs—reacted to your call for the legalization of drugs?

I'm not well-liked by many people in the field for saying these things.

It doesn't seem like that bothers you.

I want people to be provoked and to have them react to the book, and to talk about subjects that are very important to us at the levels of society and community. These issues have a great relevance. But there seems to be a lack of political sophistication and even an intolerance for reasoned debate. Instead we line up fast on one side or another and proceed to scream at each other. For me, that gets real old, real fast. I have very strong views and I do express them forcefully, but this book was designed to encourage people who care about law and justice to really think about the issues.

I have had police say to me, in person, "Norm, I couldn't find anything I disagreed with on that chapter on drugs." But when I ask if they'd be willing to speak about that openly, the suggestion is met with laughter. No, absolutely not, they can't risk their careers to do that, is what they tell me. If they do, they'll get labeled a "Stamper."

That's actually a term being used to describe people who speak out about these kinds of things in law enforcement?

(Laughs) Yes. We're very good in this society at labeling people and, in the process, cut-



ting off meaningful conversation.

While you were police chief here in Seattle, how did you feel about the department's policy of "buy-bust operations," where certain areas of town were targeted for undercover drug purchases, and where many of the people arrested were people of color?

It's a complicated issue. I wasn't then, and am not now, a fan of "buy-bust." But as a police chief, and formerly as a beat cop, I know how important it is to respond to constituent demands that something be done about street dealing, because we had drug dealers accosting passers-by, people using alleys as bathrooms, and all of it was causing residents and business owners a lot of heartburn.

My perspective, as it's always been, is that the drug war is a colossal failure and that our entire approach is backwards.

But those drug laws are on the books. If you and your officers don't enforce them, people start to ask, "Why aren't you? Are you taking money from the dealers and turning a blind eye to what's happening?" Police work is full of contradictions even at the best of times. You've got to take the position to enforce existing laws. And community policing was always a high priority with me. Buy-bust operations in particular neighborhoods had been demanded by the community because they were tired of the street-level activity itself. And it was unsightly and offensive to a

whole lot of people, who, in this capitalist society, saw their property values going down.

One of the things that doesn't make sense to a police officer is when you say something like, "Shouldn't you spend time fighting real crime, and not arresting drug users?" What the police officer thinks about that is: "What do you mean, 'real crime'?" People who peddle or use are, by the definition of the laws that we have on the book, criminals. To the police officers, they're no less or more important as criminals. We are in the position of enforcing the existing laws on the books.

But since the '90s, I began advocating quite publicly for the need to change those laws. I spoke to business groups about it, and I was surprised how well they responded to it. I think that people with a knack for understanding supply and demand, inventory, and economics really do get it. I think that's why you see some of the people in business and economics now who are speaking up in the drug reform policy movement [e.g. George Soros, Milton Friedman, University of Phoenix owner John Sperling, and Peter Lewis, head of Progressive Auto Insurance]. They understand that ours is an extravagantly funded public policy that produces an insufficient return on an economic investment. They get that.

What are you hoping will come out of your efforts, especially where other

people in law enforcement are concerned?

My hope is that one ex-police chief saying this kind of thing will encourage an incumbent police chief, somewhere, to say it, even if that just starts with medical marijuana.

It's not easy to do even that. Bush doesn't support it, and his attorney general doesn't support it, but medical marijuana makes sense: It brings comfort to people who are suffering. Until it's made completely legal, people *will* break the law to get medical marijuana. Once again, prohibition just doesn't work.

But we have a long way to go. Right now, I'm sure most people in law enforcement are saying that when I advocate the regulated legalization of drugs, I am taking a stand that is morally bankrupt, naive, incredibly destructive and harmful for our children.

What I will keep saying to that is, "Do you think the drug war is working? Do you believe we are better off today as a result of the drug war with its staggering number of casualties, including all the people in state and federal prisons?"

You know, though, I think the signs are actually more encouraging these days. I think a whole lot of people out there are listening and asking real questions. And it's far better to do that than keep making statements born of fear and ignorance.

Stamper's call for the legalization of drugs was only one of the topics covered in this interview. To read more, visit www.inthesetimes.com.

Liberalism's Brain on Drugs

Where does drug policy fit into the debate on liberty?

BY RYAN GRIM

At some point, everyone ought to throw his or her political theory—whatever it is—up against the wall of reality to see if it sticks. I ran smack into that wall when the state shackled Mark, one of my best friends, and hauled him off to a dank, violent, maximum-security prison for a 17-year stay. His crime: possession of a spoonful of cocaine, some of which they said he intended to distribute. The judge had recommended he be sent to a prison that focuses largely on drug treatment, but it is

hopelessly overcrowded. So there Mark sits in Hagerstown, Md., his letters reflecting a mind slowly losing its tether as violence and mayhem swirl around him.

I've always believed that we live in a fundamentally liberal society that can trace its way back to enlightenment thinkers like Jefferson, Madison, Locke, Mill and Rousseau. Sure, the past 24 years of the Reagan, Bush and even Clinton regimes haven't been kind, but one bedrock principle still seemed intact: If not equality and

fraternity, we'll always have liberty. And so, as guards frogmarched my friend out of the courtroom shackled hands to feet, I wondered how confining that man for 17 years jives with my understanding of our nation's values. Is imprisoning hundreds of thousands of people an acceptable policy result of a liberal, pluralistic democratic society? Or, is the drug war proving libertarians correct about the potential for abuse of government power?

The principal disagreement between lib-

“ Liberals expect their elected government to provide freedom from oppressive nongovernmental forces and to help guarantee equal access to real opportunity. ”

ertarians and liberals regarding the expansion and protection of liberty goes something like this. Libertarians argue that the state, broadly understood to include both state and federal governments, is the greatest threat to individual freedom. Therefore the best way to guard liberty is to restrict the power of the state to the greatest extent possible, leaving it only to protect two “freedom froms”—the freedom from force and the freedom from fraud. The rest, they say, will work itself out.

Liberals counterclaim that the libertarian critique ignores the reality of other organized forms of power—such as corporations, private militias and intractably racist state governments—that can infringe on an individual’s freedom. They argue that freedom can only exist fully against the backdrop of some measure of equality and opportunity. Liberalism therefore calls for the expansion of state power based on the belief that such power should be used to create space for and protect individual rights and freedoms. In other words, liberals expect their elected government to provide freedom from oppressive nongovernmental forces and to help guarantee equal access to real opportunity.

But what if the government itself becomes the oppressor?

Eric Sterling, a Reagan-era-drug-warrior-turned-reformer who now heads up the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation, refers to what he calls the “drug war exception to the Bill of Rights.” Unlawful searches and seizures are not permitted—unless cops are searching for drugs, which are not legal property and therefore not protected. No self-incrimination—unless it’s a drug test.

No cruel and unusual punishment—unless you were caught with cocaine. And so our two greatest bulwarks against tyranny, checks and balances and the Bill of Rights, are out the drug war window.

Today, one of every eight black men between the ages of 25 and 29—the cohort Mark falls into—is behind bars. The U.S. incarceration rate not only ranks number one in the world, but also some eight times higher than Western European nations.

In “An Analytical Assessment of U.S. Drug Policy,” Peter Reuter, a conservative critic of the drug war and the director of the University of Maryland’s Center on the Economics of Crime and Justice Policy, and David Boyum, a health policy consultant, have come to some radical conclusions.

“As currently implemented, American drug policies are unconvincing,” Reuter and Boyum write. “They are intrusive ... divisive ... and expensive, with an approximate \$35 billion annual expenditure on drug control ... yet they leave the nation with a massive drug problem, greater than that of any other Western nation.” Reuter and Boyum call for, among other proposals, eliminating criminal penalties associated with marijuana and drastically increasing emphasis on drug treatment instead of incarceration.

In an April essay in the *Washington Monthly*, William Galston, a leading philosopher of liberalism, challenged liberal thinkers to question how their conception of freedom might shape a liberal political view:

Edmund Burke famously observed that Americans “sniff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.” Even today, the extraordinary value Americans place on individual liberty is what most distinguishes our culture, and the political party seen by voters as the most willing to defend and expand liberty is the one that usually wins elections. Conservatives have learned this lesson; too many liberals have forgotten it. And as long as liberals fool themselves into believing that appeals to income distribution tables can take the place of policies that promote freedom, they will lose.

The questions before us are, what is the meaning of freedom in the 21st century, and what are the means needed to make it effective in our lives? Those of us who oppose the conservative answer cannot succeed by changing the question. We can

only succeed by giving a better answer.

At some point, that better answer must take into account the scope of the state’s authority to incarcerate its citizens. Imprisonment is the antithesis of individual freedom. With more than 2 million citizens locked up in American prisons and jails, the time for a better answer is long past due.

I asked Galston: Is this state of affairs an acceptable result of a pluralistic liberal system, or is there something fundamentally illiberal about American politics today?

“You could reasonably take the position that the current policies are badly flawed in principle and also leading to very negative consequences,” he says. “Certainly it’s the case that the more seriously you take liberty as the bedrock of a liberal society the more seriously you have to take the deprivation of liberty.”

He blamed the lack of drug war dissension on “the political traumas inflicted on liberal Democrats in the ’70s and ’80s in the debate over drugs and crime, when the party and liberals were tarred with a brush—soft on crime, soft on drugs, maybe even encouraging a drug culture.” But he suggests that these wounds may be healing, and that the public may be ready for a serious debate on drug and incarceration policy.

And none too soon. Silence from liberals in this debate is, in effect, an endorsement for the status quo. It is time to stand up in defense of liberty—not just equality and fraternity. ■

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Musician and radical
Muslim Reda Zine
performs live

COURTESY OF MARK LEVINE

Islam Needs Radicals

BY MARK LEVINE

George W. Bush. Tony Blair. Silvio Berlusconi. Jacques Chirac. Along with most every Western leader, pundit and policymaker, they are frantically searching for the “moderate Muslims” who can save Islam from itself and improve relations with the West.

The problem is that there’s no such thing as a moderate Muslim, at least the way these decision makers define the term. Look at whom they call moderate: President Bush often cites Jordan’s King Abdullah and Morocco’s King Muhammad as the epitome of modern, moderate Muslim leaders. But a glance at the Amnesty International reports on their countries, or those of other so-called moderate regimes, reveals them to be anything but moderate in the way they treat their citizens. In fact, their level of repression and censorship for the most part is equal to or greater than at any time since 9/11.

Searching for “moderate Islam” is an equally problematic enterprise. President Bush famously argued that “Islam means peace” after 9/11 as a way of signaling support for it. But however nice a sentiment, Islam in fact doesn’t mean peace; it means submission to the will of God, which—as anyone familiar with the history of the last two millennia knows—has historically involved quite a lot of war. Similarly, moderate Islam’s boosters point to a *hadith*, or saying of the Prophet, that argues that the “greater jihad” of

“ My radical friends and colleagues are routinely oppressed by their governments, obstructed by the United States and ignored by the media—this suggests they’re doing something right. ”

self-introspection and improvement is more fundamental for Muslims than the “lesser jihad” of war and violence. In contrast, most conservative Muslim scholars consider “greater jihad” a weak hadith—that is, not the prophet’s actual words. Its use by “moderates” to reform the *shari’a*—the Islamic code for living that some states institute as law sanctioning violence—has long generated conservative scorn.

In the last two decades, a “moderate” school of Islamist jurisprudence has in fact emerged (known as the *wasatiya* movement in Arabic). But its leaders have been variously co-opted or censored by their governments, or tend to be quite immoderate when it comes to Jews, homosexuality or full equality for women. The ones that are truly moderate strongly oppose U.S. foreign policy and much of our materialist, consumer culture. For doing so they are labeled “radicals” by their governments, and ours.

Clearly we need to re-imagine our labeling of Islam, because the leaders we consider moderate are—often rightly—considered by their citizens to be corrupt and repressive handmaidens of U.S. policies that themselves could rarely be defined as moderate. On the other hand, Muslims respect those we consider “radicals” for standing up to us, even if most don’t agree with how they’re doing it.

Yet the reality is that even the most radical of extremist groups such as al-Qaeda are not that radical. Instead, they bear striking resemblances to other utopian movements across history, from the Jacobins of post-Revolutionary France to fascists and Maoists of the last century. The tools they use to wage their war—from the Internet to the suicide vest—might be new, but their desire to violently purify their societies is all too familiar.

What would a truly radical Muslim look

like? Perhaps like the young Shiite sheikh named Anwar al-Ethari whom I met in Baghdad. He is known as the “Elastic Sheikh” because of his religious and secular university degrees and willingness to use “whatever works, wherever it comes from” to help the residents of his Sadr City neighborhood solve the myriad problems they face. Sadly, I have not heard from him in months, and fear he is among the victims of the increasing violence against the city’s Shiite population.

Or he might look like a friend of mine from Casablanca named Reda Zine. One of the leaders of the Moroccan heavy metal scene, he’s also a soon-to-be Ph.D. in Islamic studies at the Sorbonne. But he and his musical comrades were labeled “satanists” by moderate Islamists and arrested by the moderate Moroccan government because they dared to write powerful—and really loud—songs challenging the country’s patriarchal politics and culture.

Or they might look like Nadia Yassine, the leader of Morocco’s biggest political force, the religiously-oriented Justice and Development movement. In our first meeting she explained that Islam was “hijacked by men” after the Prophet Muhammad’s death and has suffered for it ever since. The next time I saw her she suggested that Morocco might be better

off as a republic than a monarchy, a view that landed her in jail, courtesy of the same moderate government that went after the metalheads.

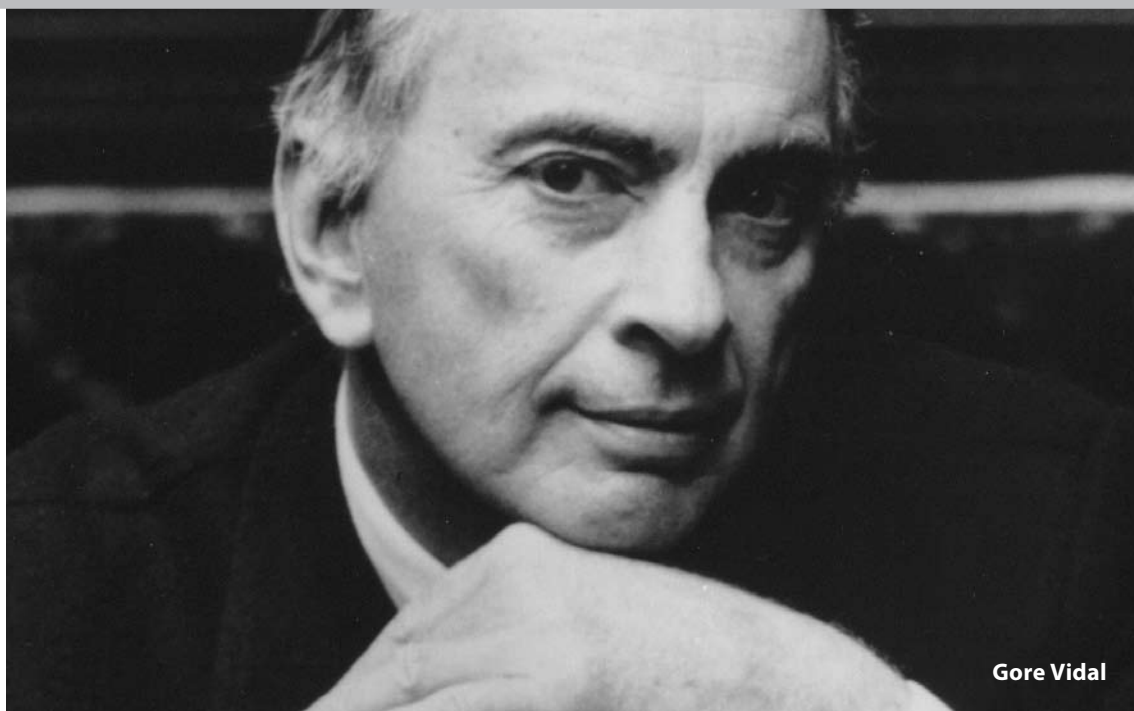
It is she who first suggested to me that what Islam needs is more radicals, not moderates—“but radicals in a good sense.” Sitting next to her and nodding in agreement was the Swiss Muslim philosopher Tariq Ramadan. One of the leading progressive voices in Europe, his visa to teach at Notre Dame University was revoked by the U.S. government on the utterly baseless charge of being “tied to terrorists.”

My radical friends and colleagues are routinely oppressed by their governments, attacked by conservatives, obstructed by the United States and ignored by the media and peace groups who should be highlighting their activities and struggles. This suggests they’re doing something right, and that we should be doing more to help them. Of course, that would be pretty radical; but how else to achieve the radical transformation that is necessary to bring peace and democracy to the Middle East, not to mention to America? ■

MARK LEVINE is a professor of modern Middle Eastern history, culture and Islamic studies at the University of California, Irvine, and the author of *Why They Don’t Hate Us: Lifting the Veil on the Axis of Evil*.

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Gore Vidal

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BY DOUG IRELAND

Vidal—Never More Vital

Just in time to help us celebrate Gore Vidal's birthday—he turned 80 on October 3—comes Dennis Altman's *Gore Vidal's America*. This is not a biography; Fred Kaplan's admirable *Gore Vidal: A Life* definitively fills that niche. But Altman's

book-length essay gives us a valuable understanding of the central project of America's most visible radical public intellectual: to help us imagine and develop alternatives to the dominant understandings of American society.

"Vidal's constant pre-occupation," Altman writes, "has been to excavate the past, explain the present, and warn us to the perils of the future, and to do so by reaching the largest possible audience." A brilliant novelist, political essayist, literary critic, historian, scenarist, television pundit, *raconteur extraordinaire*, polemicist and pamphleteer in the Tom Paine tradition, Vidal's "quite calculated creation of himself as a celebrity [h]as given him a significant audience for half a century." Vidal's celebrity has helped him

to explain to a large public the insidious effects of America's domination by a ruling class of power elites bent on imperial expansion, and how this has led to "the destruction of any meaningful choice or genuine information in an electoral process which is increasingly irrelevant to most Americans."

It may surprise many readers that one of America's most erudite and cosmopolitan writers is largely an autodidact who never went to university, eschewing Harvard to embark on his writing career. Enlisting as a teenager toward the close of World War II, the precocious Vidal drew on his military service to write his first novel when he was only 17, the finely chiseled *Williwaw*—a tale whose cynicism about war was compared to that of Stephen Crane (whom Vidal admired),

and which thrust Vidal immediately into the public eye.

After a stint as an editor at Dutton (where he championed the young James Baldwin and unsuccessfully sought to publish an early version of *Go Tell It on the Mountain*), Vidal turned to writing full time. His third novel, *The City and the Pillar*, published in 1948, achieved a notoriety that would never leave him. An extraordinarily courageous book for a young writer, it presented homosexuality—illegal at the time—as a normal variant of human existence. Excoriated violently by critics, including the *New York Times* (which even refused ads for the book), it severely damaged Vidal's career. The lit-crit biz viciously pigeonholed him as a "fag" writer of "pornography" (although there's little description of physical coupling in any of Vidal's fictions) and ignored his output for years. *The City and the Pillar* nonetheless had

Gore Vidal's America

By Dennis Altman
Polity Press
216 pages,
\$19.95, paperback

an unusual impact, selling more than a million copies in paperback and for decades afterward, as Altman correctly notes, helping a great number of "same-sexers" (a preferred Vidalian vocable) to accept their homosexuality and come out—the author of this review among them.

Politics has always been central, in one way or another, to Vidal's fiction. He first seriously dealt with U.S. imperialism in the 1950 novel *Dark Green, Bright Red*, about American interference in Central America. Set in Guatemala, the novel prefigured the CIA-organized coup four years later against the radical left-wing government of President

Jacobo Arbenz at the behest of United Fruit. (The company's colors were green and red.)

When his next eight novels didn't sell, he dashed off others in a few weeks under a pseudonym—the entertaining detective novels signed "Edgar Box," which were both political and presented homosexuality as normal, like 1952's delightful *Death in the Fifth Position*, a satire of McCarthyism featuring a sweatily masculine ballet dancer who chases everything in pants.

Radicalized by the Vietnam war and the '60s social movements, Vidal was a founding essayist of the *New York Review of Books*, where many of his best political essays appeared—collected in such essential books as *Homage to Daniel Shays*, *Reflections upon a Sinking Ship* and *The Second American Revolution*.

Next came his best-known fictions. *Myra Breckinridge*, published in 1968, was in the forefront of the "cultural assault on assumed norms of gender and sexuality which swept the world" in the late '60s and '70s, and, as Altman puts it, "said more to subvert the dominant rules on sex and gender than is contained in a shelf of queer theory treatises."

Vidal's radical critiques of power and government in his American Chronicles series of novels included the magnificent and meticulously researched *Lincoln* and *Burr*—which, as the critic Harold Bloom has written, tell us more about what really happened in American history than many orthodox historians do.

Vidal has often taken his critiques to the little screen, most recently writing and hosting "The American Presidents." Originally produced for the U.K.'s Channel 4, the series was purchased here by The History Channel—for which it was way too radical. Aired once late at night, it was then permanently

shelved—a pity, for it should be required viewing in civics and history classes instead of the bowdlerized pablum they normally serve up.

Altman performs a signal service by refuting in detail the absurd accusations of anti-Semitism against Vidal, whose late partner of 55 years, Howard Austen, was Jewish. Altman demonstrates how these accusations by neocons like Norman Podhoretz literally put words in Vidal's mouth that he never said or wrote, and stem from Vidal's critiques of Israel's apartheid government and its defenders here at home.

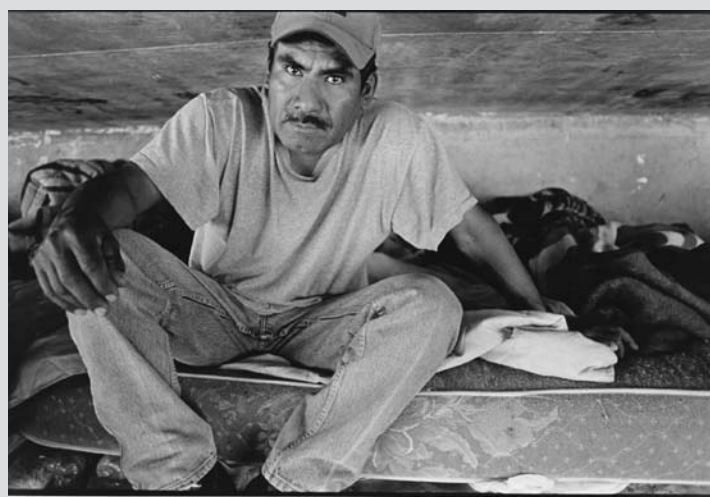
This is not an uncritical appreciation of Vidal. Altman's first book—the 1971 *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*, which owed much to Herbert Marcuse, and which became the most influential of the early gay liberation texts in the United States—was written when Altman was quite left-wing. But as Vidal has become more radical, Altman has

become less so. He finds Vidal's attacks on American imperialism "overstated" (I do not), and skewers Vidal for not having a "sociological imagination" and failing to write more about the working classes. This critique is like taxing Proust for not being Zola—it is the dissection of the ruling elites he knows so well that has been Vidal's primary goal. With somewhat more justice, Altman argues that Vidal failed "to grasp the full magnitude of the scars left by race on the United States."

But this is still a useful book, because it paints the sweep and scope of an extraordinarily courageous writer who refused to deny his sexuality while also refusing to let it, alone, define him. Vidal has been a great radical teacher of a mass audience. Happy Birthday, Gore—*Cent'anni!* ■

DOUG IRELAND is an *In These Times* contributing editor and can be reached through his blog, *DIRELAND* (<http://direland.typepad.com/direland>).

ART SPACE



"Beyond Borders: Transnational Working Communities" consists of photos and oral histories documenting the lives of Oaxacan and Guatemalan migrants in northern Mexico and the United States. Photographer David Bacon focuses on migration as a process that creates communities. The show is traveling through the three campuses of Mexico City University through December 14.

BY CHRIS BARSANTI

Bohemia Revisited

Mainstream commodification of alternative culture hardly seems noteworthy these days. While it may be infuriating to see corporations routinely boost their profits by mining rebellion from the fringe and

repackaging it for the middlebrow, how are you going to stop Time-Warner, short of taking over its Manhattan offices and hauling the suits off in tumbrels?

Instead of spewing bile, Vanderbilt sociology professor Richard Lloyd takes a different tack on the subject: Just how does this culturally aware fringe create and live in their own spaces outside of

the mainstream? His engaging but sometimes unfocused study, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*,

takes as its subject Chicago's West Side neighborhood Wicker Park—stomping ground of aspiring artists and musicians, not to mention hungry real estate agents and journalists looking for an easy local color piece. His goal? To “make sense of the role that the new bohemia plays in the context of flexible, global capitalism.”

Fortunately for the reader, this involves Lloyd—a University of Chicago graduate student in the '90s—schmoozing scensters in a lot of coffeehouses and bars. While his approach provides a welcome sprinkling of color in what could have been a tedious economics slog, it also means Lloyd spends a fair amount of time listening to bartenders bitch about how Gold Coast yuppies and Schaumburg suburbanites don't know how to act or tip.

Lloyd's historical portrait of Wicker Park is spottily interesting, but likely slow going for anybody who knows the area even slightly. Once a European melting pot, the neighborhood became mostly Polish during the Depression before attracting waves of Mexican and Puerto Rican immigrants in the '60s. After spiraling down due to white flight (and the disappearance of industrial

jobs), Wicker Park began to turn around in the '80s when artists seeking cheap rents and easy access to public transportation started moving in, grooving on the gritty character memorialized decades earlier by Nelson Algren. By the '90s, music industry scouts were luring away neighborhood acts like Liz Phair, while art galleries and coffee shops opened at an alarming pace.

Lloyd crisply illustrates the neighborhood's epochs though

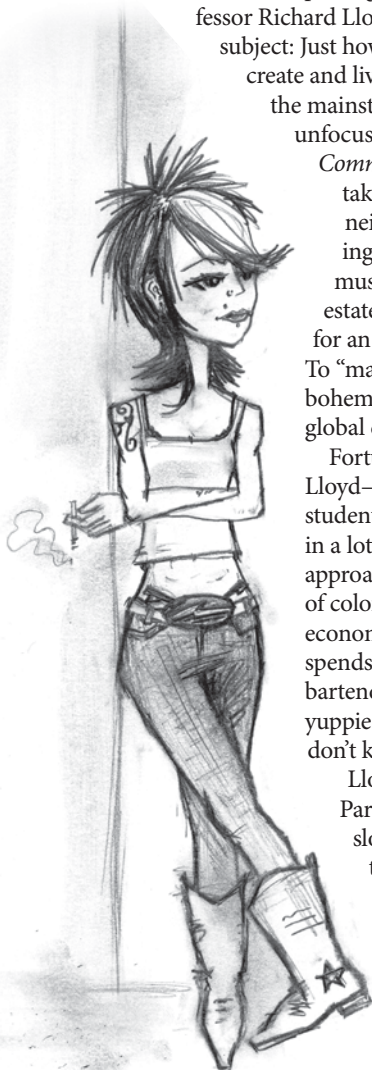
Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City
by Richard Lloyd
Routledge
Taylor & Francis, Inc.
312 pages, \$19.95

the dramatic history of the nondescript building at 1934 North Avenue: A dressmakers' sweatshop in the early 20th century, it became a storage facility in the '70s, then fell into disrepair in the '80s, haunted by addicts and dealers. The space was occupied from 1989 to 1998 by Urbis Orbis Café, a classic hipster hangout remembered nostalgically by interviewees, then an antique shop and finally, in 2001, by the cast of MTV's “The Real World,” whose members were treated to memorable demonstrations by locals irate at the mass media invasion.

Why were they so upset? Because Wicker Park had evolved into a “bohemia”—a state of mind/geography that in theory can hardly co-exist with mainstream capitalist society. For an example of bohemia in the classical Parisian sense, Lloyd references Balzac's quip that bohemia is “a stimulating interlude until the chance for real work arrives.” Current-day bohemia is somewhat different: For all the lip service anti-capitalist viewpoints may be given in such alternative outposts, they are in fact capitalist enclaves producing not widgets or services, but culture. MTV didn't show up for the coffee. They literally came to consume the cool—a phenomena detailed in depth by Lloyd's fellow alums in *The Baffler*.

Lloyd's description of the new bohemians of Wicker Park as “culture producers” may be far from romantic, but it's certainly apt: “unpaid for their advance work, Wicker Park locals are useful as avatars of cool.” Lloyd shows how “the bohemian disposition that makes ‘living on the edge’ a supreme virtue is in fact quite adaptive to labor realities.” That is, being an artist/bartender with a flexible schedule and no mortgage dovetails better with the New Economy than the postwar 9-to-5 guy with two cars and a house. But while the hours may be great, cool doesn't pay particularly well.

Does all this in the end make Wicker Park anything more than a test market for new trends? Does that even matter? Unfortunately, for all the affection Lloyd shows for his test neighborhood, *Neo-Bohemia* is far too square a book to even begin answering that larger and rather vital question. Despite his valuable insights, Lloyd's analysis of hipster trends and attitudes is limited by its charming innocence, reminiscent of a '50s reporter checking out the Village to see what those beatnik kids are up to. ■



A Neo-Bohemian.

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

Empire Made Easy

Banish those nasty guilt twinges over America's ambitions to empire. Getting a jump on the holidays, Thomas P.M. Barnett is marketing a feel-good guide to conquest and capitalism, a sequel to his bestseller,

The Pentagon's New Map. In *Blueprint for Action*, the *Esquire* editor and former Defense Department strategist declares that we're doing the world a favor by bombing our way to global free enterprise.

Brash and breezy, Barnett's plan for world conquest comes complete with its own video game vocabulary: The industrialized West is the Core. The Third World is the Gap. The aim of the game is to "shrink the Gap" by deploying the Leviathan, America's "high-speed, high-lethality and high-precision" warfighting capacity, "a force for global good that ... has no equal."

Through conquest, occupation and occasional diplomacy, America will cure the world's ills. This transformation will be achieved through the miracle of globalization, or "connectivity," Barnett's code for capitalism, which magically produces universal affluence, pluralism and democracy.

By contrast, Barnett believes, "disconnectedness defines danger," a mantra he repeats with the confidence of someone who confuses alliteration with meaning. He simultaneously asserts that his plan for world domination will eliminate terrorism—because ultimately, everyone will have a cell phone and laptop and live happily ever

Blueprint for Action: A Future Worth Creating
By Thomas P.M. Barnett
G. P. Putnam's Sons
440 pages, \$26.95

after—and acknowledges that in the short run, "regime change doesn't exactly reduce your terrorist pool."

No matter. Against all evidence to the contrary, Barnett insists that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was a wonderful thing because it somehow flushed out terrorists by immiserating the masses: "In the end, it was almost impossible for the Iraq occupation to go too badly, because the worse it became, the more it transformed the region." The reality that Iraq never threatened us, that it was a secular state—and a relatively globalized one at that—pales next to the glory of Shock and Awe, the first strike in grand global conflagration: "The Big Bang in the Middle East was ... about speeding the killing to its logical conclusion," that "logical conclusion" being lasting world peace and prosperity.

Unfortunately, he's not kidding. And he's got plenty of fans across the political spectrum. Barnett's recipe for war-to-end-all-wars is a sort of stone soup,



chock full of ingredients to whet liberal appetites. Good-guy Barnett hints that he opposes the Patriot Act and regrets abuses at Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib. He advocates for "transparency" (when he's not drooling over covert operations). He gives lip service to internationalism and urges greater use of the International Criminal Court (though not for the United States—he seems to suggest we deserve permanent exemption from prosecution because we're pure of heart). Moreover, he lays claim to a passionate desire to better the world, asserting that since 9/11, America understands that "there is a world of pain beyond the expanding global economy. I think we see

one-third of humanity with noses pressed against the glass, wondering what it will take for them to come inside and enjoy the same sense of security and economic opportunity."

Keep your eyes on the prize, Barnett exhorts. By killing the few, the many will get iPods and maybe a chance to host the Olympics. American power and privilege are intrinsically beneficent. Heck, it would be "misguided in the extreme" for Americans to give up our gas guzzling because reducing our dependence on foreign oil would diminish our influence on the Middle East, to that region's great detriment.

Though he pretends otherwise, in Barnett's cosmos, democracy doesn't count for much. He cheerfully suggests that America forge a strategic alliance by giving Iran the Bomb, cites Venezuela as a "rogue state" ripe for American invasion, and anticipates hooking up with China, India and Russia, "military partners who won't run at the sight of blood, argue incessantly over the rights of 'enemy combatants,' or see their governments collapse every time the terrorists land a lucky strike back home." He carefully refrains from characterizing terrorists as implacable foes—someday we'll want to negotiate peace with them.

There's only one group that earns Barnett's enduring enmity: antiwar protestors. By obstructing American empire, they're deemed "most guilty of denying the Gap positive integration with the Core." Antiwar activists condemn the Gap to instability, Barnett claims, thus impeding economic development and imposing "death and destruction, as well as ... both disease and distressed refugees." Funny, I thought war did that. Alas, all of Barnett's Orwellian doublespeak cannot be dismissed as too stupid to do damage. After all, look who's president. ■

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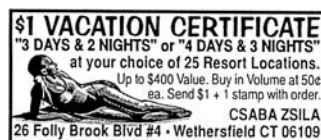


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See No Evil

Continued from page 19

business and economic elite are trapped in a dilemma of their own making: Americans are now hooked on cheap Chinese goods, while the Chinese are hooked on selling to Americans. Raising prices could enrich Chinese producers, but also cause a collapse in demand for their products.

This interdependency between the U.S. and Chinese economies means that American business executives, government policymakers and perhaps even ordinary citizens have more leverage with the government of China than they realize. Consider this crucial question: Who can more easily afford a rupture? The Americans, with their vastly diversified economy, or the Chinese, whose economic empire is essentially built on satisfying one single, bargain-hungry customer—America?

I don't know the answer to that question, but let me suggest that, for Americans at least, the price of having principles may be to test China's resolve more often and more pointedly. I am reminded of this possibility when I turned up at a Web café

on one of the last days of my recent visit. It was 8:30 and the café was just opening. I'd been there three mornings running and a woman had helped me navigate the Chinese keyboard and screen prompts so I could reach an English interface. This morning the routine was different. There was a black vinyl binder at the front counter in front of her. Inside was a sheet for foreign nationals who wanted to use the Web. Before I could log in, I had to write my name and my passport number and state the purpose of my visit.

I complained to the woman about the sign-up sheet—she showed me to a PC anyway. Before I sat down, a man appeared and he said that unless I signed the book, I couldn't use the Web café.

I told him I refused to sign. He waved his hand angrily at me, showing me the door. "American go home," he told me.

And that's what I did. ■

G. PASCAL ZACHARY teaches journalism at Stanford University and is a fellow at the German Marshall Fund. He is the author of *The Diversity Advantage: Multicultural Identity in the New World Economy*.

Law Is Dead

Continued from page 21

and dumped their baby's corpse into a black plastic bag, along with all the other discharge.

"She told me to go throw it into a truck which had a large container kind of thing at the back," says Xia, his voice quavering over the line. "When I opened the door and looked in, it was full of black bags and blood."

The couple was sent home hours later. But in a bizarre twist, local authorities returned to arrest Zhu just a week later, this time because another of her sister-in-laws who was also pregnant with a second child had gone into hiding. Though Zhu was still frail from the abortion, she said authorities held her "as ransom for five terrible days." Then, after her sister-in-law was found and aborted at five months, Zhu was fined RMB 150, (about \$19) and released.

Similar reports have been filtering out of various provinces in China for the last few months and "are the surest sign that law is dead in China," says Gao Zhi Zheng, an activist lawyer in Beijing.

"One of my clients is an unmarried

woman from [a central Henan province] who was aborted at seven months because it seems the authorities took it upon themselves to decide a single woman had no right to have a baby," Gao said, as he spread pictures his client and her partner had taken of their aborted fetus across his table. "Look at this, is this abortion or murder?"

A former employee in the Linyi family planning department, who asked that he be identified by only as Cao, says such cruel measures are usually carried out by "overzealous" local officials.

"They're looking to fulfill quotas [of women prevented from having a second child] or simply trying to contain birthrates in their regions after being berated for allowing them to increase by senior officials," Cao says.

And almost always, other local officials collude in covering up the incidents, which are illegal under Chinese law, Jiang says.

That's why even when concerned central government officials in Beijing finally sent an investigative team into Shandong earlier this month, "local officials stopped us and other affected people from meeting with them and prevented (the team) from coming to our village," Xia says. And even after the National Population and Family Plan-



RICHARD A. BROOKS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ning Commission's admission of wrongdoing and sacking of Shandong's errant family planning workers, local authorities continue to hold Chen and harass affected people.

The incidents reveal just how tenuous Beijing's hold on powerful local authorities and officials is becoming. But more importantly, says Gao, "the deep and abiding wounds the gory abortions and other similar crimes committed by local authorities have created in local communities are beginning to fester and could prove dangerous to China's stability."

About 74,000 public protests rocked China last year, up about 50 percent from two years ago, and much of the unrest was caused by ire over corrupt and hard-nosed local officials, according to the Ministry of Public Security.

Xia says that until what happened to him and his family, he thought of himself as a model citizen.

"But now I'm speaking out!" he says. "Leaders here have tried to intimidate us from trying to pursue our case. They've said we'll give you some compensation and all that, but what they've done is arrest those trying to represent us, like Chen. So we will continue our fight." ■

Bush World

Continued from backpage

raunch is Republican. The sexuality that reigns supreme in Bush World bears the basic imprimaturs of right-wing ideology: gross materialism, sexual hypocrisy and acquiescence in the name of empowerment. It is in every sense a conservative wet dream come true.

Market-ready and mass-produced

The "mainstreaming of porn," a phrase that refers to the ubiquity of both pornographic norms and porn itself, was as much an economic phenomenon as a cultural shift. Popular culture in America is driven by what sells, and nothing sells as well as sex. AT&T and General Motors bought themselves cable companies to more easily offer us porn in the privacy of our living rooms, while hotel chains like Marriot, Hilton and Westin made sure we could scratch that itch on the road. And then flailing dot-com entrepreneurs, amateur exhibitionists and porn veterans alike discovered the Internet. The rest is history.

The meteoric rise of the porn industry is both the cause and effect of the mainstreaming of its product. The more we sell porn, the more "okay" it becomes. The more "okay" porn becomes, the more okay it is to sell porn—everywhere and all the time. Today porn does not just sell sex, it sells everything—clothes, body parts, deodorants, books, magazines, celebrities. The rise of porn has been accompanied by an enormous boom in plastic surgery, as women go to the beauty salon and under the knife to reshape their bodies to fit the porn aesthetic. In turn, the fashion industry churns out skimpier and skimpier clothes to better reveal these manufactured bodies with personalities to match.

The same companies who could once only shill sneakers in the name of revolution now find that they can finance entire industries in the name of sexual freedom. Levy decries raunch culture for "endlessly reiterating one particular—and particularly commercial—shorthand for sexiness," one that is "fuckable and salable." The secret of pornography's triumph, however, lies more in its construction of sexuality as a commodity than its appeal to male desire. The market requires a readymade version of "hotness" that can be sold as a product to the largest pos-

sible consumer base. The X-rated version of sexuality is simply the most obvious and well-tested choice.

Better yet, in the spirit of true capitalism, the hot porn star look is also democratic, in that it can easily be reproduced with the right attitude (and, of course, a whole lot of money). Now you and I can look like Pamela Anderson or any of the pornified, plastic-doll celebrities, as both MTV's "I Want a Famous Face" and Fox's "The Swan" eagerly revealed. Corporate America has finally learned how to apply the principles of assembly line production to manufacture a Model-T of sexuality.

Less bang for the buck?

The most striking aspect of this booty-on-tap culture is its relationship—or lack thereof—to actual sex. Despite all the bumping and grinding on our televisions, none of us are more likely to get laid—a reality that hand-wringers on both the left and the right seem to miss.

In the schizophrenic Republican nudie bar, pop nymphets like Britney Spears and Jessica Simpson rise to stardom by selling their bodies even as they loudly proclaim their virginity. Debbie Cope, who makes

a brief appearance in *Female Chauvinist Pigs* as a 19-year old willing to masturbate on camera for a "Girls Gone Wild" crew, tells Levy: "People watch videos and think the girls in them are real slutty, but I'm a virgin!" Debbie is the strange fruit borne by the unholy coupling of God and Mammon in Bush World, the epitome of its twisted message to young girls: Act like a slut—just don't be one.

As for adults, the raunch culture has brought pornography right into the bedroom. The booming relationship advice industry is now churning out sex guides to teach us *How to Have a XXX Sex Life* and *How to Make Love Like a Porn Star*, published by the likes of tell-all publisher Judith Regan, described by *Vanity Fair* as "to the right of Genghis Khan" for her take-no-prisoners appetite for power and success. Regan characterized her offerings to the *New York Times* as "more outrageous and candid and at the same time more fun and friendly, like Las Vegas." A family-friendly Las Vegas, that is, as Doubleday Broadway's Kristine Poupolo makes clear, "We're not publishing to shock ... I like to think we're improving peoples' lives." This would explain her company's latest help-

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

Conservative Jones, boy detective



and the Mystery of the Missing Mystery

CONSERVATIVE JONES IS STUDYING THE M.S.M. FOR CLUES!

VALERIE PLAME--JUDY MILLER--SCOOTER LIBBY--NONE OF THIS MAKES ANY SENSE!

THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR HAS BEEN INVESTIGATING SOMETHING FOR TWO YEARS--BUT FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT!



THE EVER-FOOLISH MOONBAT MCWACKY THINKS HE KNOWS THE ANSWER!

ER--I BELIEVE HE'S BEEN INVESTIGATING THE FACT THAT AN UNDERCOVER CIA OPERATIVE WAS OUTHED IN AN ACT OF POLITICAL RETALIATION AGAINST HER HUSBAND.

OH, MOONBAT--WHEN WILL YOU START LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD?



THE BOY DETECTIVE SPRINGS INTO ACTION!

YOU SEE, SON, THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE CRIMINALIZATION OF POLITICS!

THANKS, MISTER KRISTOL! THAT REALLY HELPS ME FRAME THE ISSUE!

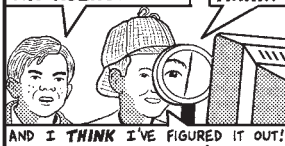


THE RIGHT-WING BLOGS PROVE INDISPENSABLE AS ALWAYS!

WHAT A GOOD POINT! IF PEOPLE ALREADY KNEW JOE WILSON HAD A WIFE--THEN WASN'T SHE ALREADY "OUTHED"?

OH FOR GOD'S SAKE, OF COURSE PEOPLE KNEW SHE EXISTED--THEY JUST DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS A CIA AGENT!

QUIET, MOONBAT! I'M TRYING TO THINK!



CAN YOU GUESS THE SOLUTION TO THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MYSTERY? (TURN PAGE OVER FOR THE ANSWER!)



ful title *The Many Joys of Sex Toys* by Anne Semans. Pornography itself has become the must-have sex toy for any couple looking to reignite that perennially endangered spark.

Yet one of the often-cited books of 2003 was Michele Weiner-Davis' *The Sex-Starved Marriage*. Her dire warnings about marital celibacy were echoed by newspapers that reported nearly 20 percent of all married couples have sex less than 10 times a year. While it remains unclear whether these numbers represent a new trend in marital behavior, raunch culture has clearly done little to improve the sex lives of real men and women.

Pamela Paul, *Time* contributor and author of *The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony*, lays the blame for these sexual woes squarely on pornography itself. Her recent book, *Pornified*, claims that the mainstreaming of porn has resulted in less sex among couples, as men spend hours surfing the Internet rather than getting it on with the real women in their beds. Contrary to all the talk about using porn to jumpstart the libido, it ends up making physical contact with real bodies seem boring, inadequate and way too much work. While Paul's hard data—which is based on a slim 100-plus person survey—is problematic, as is her tendency to treat pornography as the most important cause of our relationship woes, the book reveals the neo-puritanical reality of our smut-drenched culture.

What could be more conservative than a society that finds its pleasures in the distance of simulated sex rather than the intimacy of real intercourse, the transactional detachment of consumer demand instead of the emotional vulnerability of human desire?

Acquiescence in the name of empowerment

At the heart of the raunch culture—and the reason for its triumph—is the dubious equation of female self-objectification with sexual freedom. This logic, as Levy observes, has been whole-heartedly embraced by many young women responding to the age-old fear of male rejection. In a culture that encourages us to say “Yes! Yes! Yes!” it is difficult to demur at the prospect of playing porn star without being labeled a man-hating bitch or at least an un-sexy prude.

In Levy's words, “Raunch culture, then, isn't an entertainment option, it's a litmus test of female uptightness.” To be hot today entails embracing porn-like gymnastics in the bedroom, stripper wear in our

wardrobes, surgery scars on our bodies and wall-to-wall visuals of gyrating, barely clad women everywhere we go—all in the name of our liberation. Under the guise of losing our inhibitions, we are being bullied into performing a specific version of female sexuality.

Very early in her book, Levy poses a question that exposes the emptiness of the porn-equals-freedom logic: “[H]ow is imitating a stripper or porn star—a woman whose job is to imitate arousal in the first place—going to render us sexually liberated?” The porn-as-liberation canard relies on a confusion between pornography and pornified sexuality. Where a porn actress, stripper or prostitute imitates sexual acquiescence in exchange for a man's money, the pornified woman exchanges real sexual submission in hope of his approval. There are no prizes for guessing which woman has less power of the two.

When Olympic swimmer Haley Clark is—in Levy's words—“pictured naked and bending over in *Playboy*, in a position referred to as ‘presenting’ when exhibited in the animal kingdom,” to prove that female athletes can be sexy, it raises a couple of questions: Who thinks female athletes are not sexy and therefore needs to be convinced otherwise? And, whose version of “sexy” does Clark have to conform to in order to make her point?

But where Clark may at least earn greater celebrity for her public submission, girl-gone-wild Debbie Cope will have to make do with a “free” hat—and the knowledge that her vagina has played a small but essential role in ensuring the success of a \$100 million franchise. Jenna Jameson, one of the wealthiest women in the porn industry, would undoubtedly think Debbie a fool. Yet the porn star herself is part of the larger ideological apparatus that transforms porn sexuality into a culturally desirable form of femininity.

The mainstreaming of pornography has required a significant distortion of the reality of sex work. Prostitution, for example, requires women to simulate sexual pleasure during intercourse as part of their job. It comes with the territory. Yet, the working girls featured on HBO's brothel reality show, “Cathouse: The Series,” present themselves as nymphomaniacs who regularly enjoy earth-shattering orgasms with their johns. Prostitution at the Moonlight Bunny Ranch isn't just lucrative—“I'm a businesswoman”—but also intensely pleasurable—“I

come all the time. You can't do this job if you don't enjoy it.” Worse, experiences at the brothel are represented as valuable sex lessons for men to take back with them into the real world. With the mainstreaming of porn, the tricks of the prostitute's trade have been transformed into cultural imperatives for all women.

In effect, the logic of the raunch culture is eerily similar to that Christian ideal of femininity, the Surrendered Wife. Both preach empowerment through acquiescence, promising greater happiness through the fulfillment of archetypal female roles. Bush World offers women only two choices: repression or commodification.

Toward a more sex-positive feminism

Drawing a bright line between sexual freedom and sexual acquiescence is not an easy task in a world still defined by male desire. Yet simply rejecting male lust—à la Andrea Dworkin or Catherine McKinnon—is not a viable option for heterosexual women. Nor is falling back on the anti-porn bigotry of older feminists, as Paul and Levy do. Where Paul's book ends up reading as a wholesale attack on all pornography, Levy resurrects tired old stereotypes of sex workers as victims.

Both authors, however, offer an important reminder for sex-positive feminists that pornography, just like every other part of the sex industry, trades sex for money. That some women may experience personal freedom or boost their sexual self-esteem in the process is entirely incidental to the job at hand. Sex-positive feminists are entirely correct to champion sex work as work, and therefore the right of women to use their bodies to earn a living—and have fun while doing it, if they so choose. But de-stigmatizing sex work is not the same as championing a porn version of sexuality for all women.

For now, for all the talk of liberation in Porno America, women have merely exchanged one sexual tyrant for another. It is why the over-the-top displays of flesh and lust—accompanied by a chorus of protests from dutifully outraged preachers and parents—seem so eerily familiar, especially to women who recognize in the faces of a Paris Hilton or Pamela Anderson the triumph of our old friend, the Whore. Long exiled to the margins of men's lives and minds, she has today dethroned her arch-nemesis, the Madonna. The Queen is dead. Long live the Queen. ■

Babes in

BY LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY

BUSH WORLD

Rauch culture offers good old-fashioned pleasure, Republican style

Just before the Republican National Convention came to town in 2004, New York newspapers were buzzing with rumors that the city's high-priced prostitutes and strippers were gearing up for "one grand old party." The reports quickly gained currency, for no one had problems imagining randy GOP types forking over \$100 dollar bills in the dark of the night to be serviced by acquiescent, uber-sexualized women—the same women likely to be condemned as moral degenerates on the convention floor the next morning. This is, after all, what passes for sexual abandon in a conservative world—the kind of "Good Old-Fashioned Pleasure" a San Diego escort agency was touting when it changed its name to "GOP" during another such convention eight years before.

For the past five years, Americans have been wallowing in this quaint version of sexual pleasure, defined by skimpy thongs, stripper poles, porn boobs and faux chick-on-chick action. In a Bush World where commerce is king, it is all-but-inevitable that the dominant image of sexuality is that of a woman on sale. In her book, *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, *New York* magazine editor Ariel Levy describes the new-old female sexuality that lies at the core of "raunch culture": "A tawdry, tarty, cartoonlike version of female sexuality has become so ubiquitous, it no longer seems particular. What we once regarded as a kind of sexual expression we now view as sexuality." As an L.A. workout guru specializing in "Cardio Strip-tease" blithely tells her, "Stripping equals sex."

Contrary to Levy's assumption, however, this shift did not occur despite the rise of the religious Right but because of it. Sex-positive feminists, who argue for the liberatory power of sexual expression, and defend the rights of sex workers, may have unintentionally done their bit to ease the transition—for reasons too complicated to shoehorn into this article. But make no mistake,



CONTINUED ON PAGE 39